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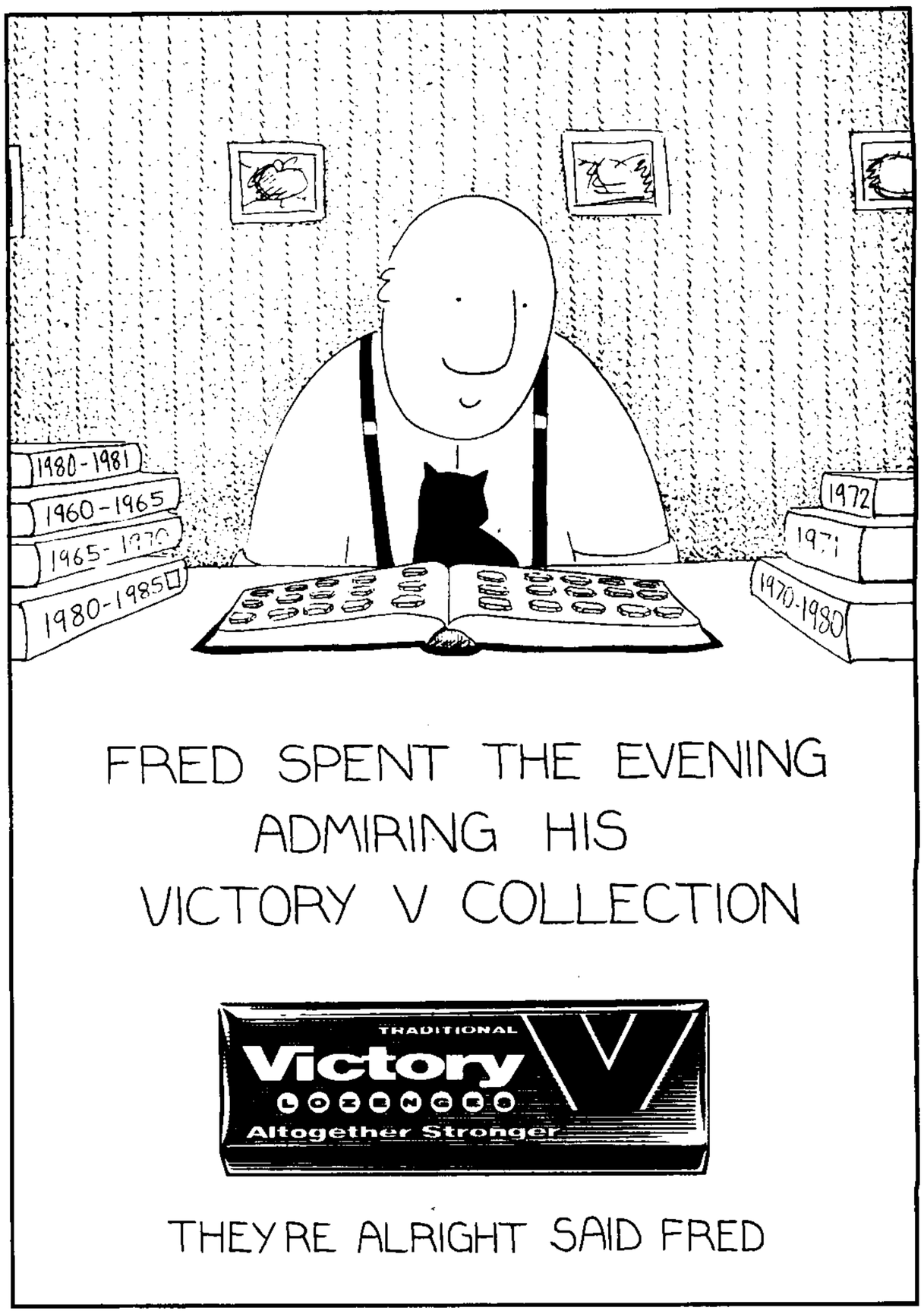

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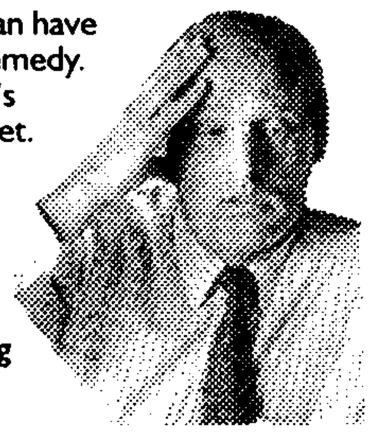

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THAT DINNER – at No.10

*What Major **did** say...*

"Mr Major's speech of farewell to Mr O'Donnell was entirely non-political. It was generous and amusing and demonstrated that the Prime Minister was able to take a joke against himself — delivering a witty parody of the Private Eye Secret Diary of John Major 47¾...in the Adrian Mole style"

DAILY TELEGRAPH – Monday January 17th

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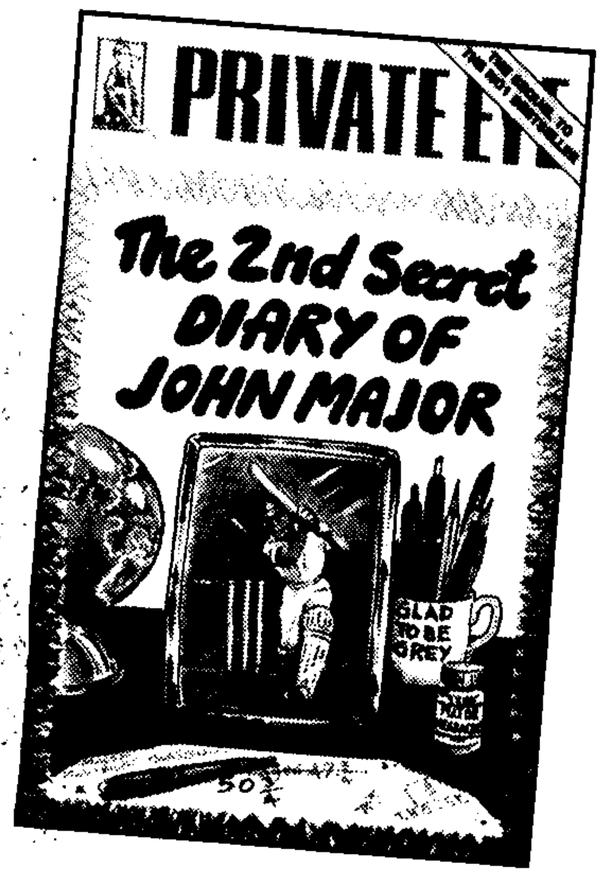

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Gnome

MR PORTILLO made an inspiring speech last week when he identified the British Disease.

He placed the blame for this country's decline firmly at the door of cynicism.

And he spoke nothing but truth.

But Mr Portillo, in pointing the finger at the media for spreading the cancer, did not go far enough.

For the disease has progressed beyond the chattering media folk who run our press and television, and has penetrated to the very heart of government.

This week the Treasury itself fell prey to cynicism. Treasury officials know perfectly well that the Conservative Party is the party of low taxation. They know perfectly well that Mr Major promised to cut taxes. And they therefore know that taxes must have been cut.

But what was their response to cynical Labour questions about tax?

"Tax from April will increase by £12.50 a week for the average family."

Surely it is time, as Mr Portillo said, to start censoring this sort of whining defeatism and to start locking up anybody found guilty of it?

As I said when I heard the speech: "Mr Portillo is right. Not as right as me, but it'll have to do for now."

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
The 1622 Committee
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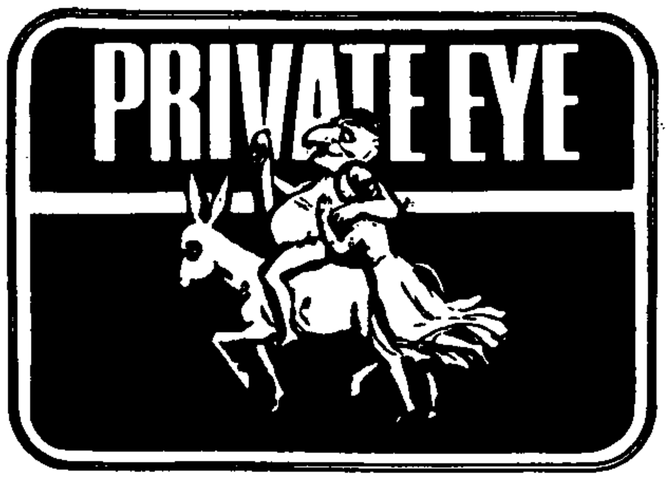


COLOUR SECTION

28th January — **CLUB MEETING : 12.30 for 1pm : Sutton United FC**
Subject : Family Values
Speaker : Mr T. Yeo

Rotary Club of Sutton

JOHN MAJOR still has a few defenders in Fleet Street — Stewart Steven of the London *Evening Standard*, Sir Nick Lloyd of the *Daily Express* and Jonathan Holborow of the *Mail on Sunday*.

Holborow's loyalty, however, is being sorely tried. Two weekends ago, Major was aghast to learn that the *MoS* was planning to splash a big interview with Tim Yeo. He called Holborow and urged him not to give the piece too much prominence. "Tim Yeo," the PM explained, "is a cunt."

Holborow went ahead anyway, much to Downing Street's annoyance. Two days later, Holborow was indignant to learn that "senior Conservative sources" were spreading an untrue story that Lady Caithness had been driven to kill herself because she was being pursued by hacks from the *MoS* who were questioning her about her husband's mistress. He was convinced that the smear was the government's revenge on him for having published the Yeo interview.

Later that week Holborow and his political editor, Peter Dobbie, entertained Major's departing press officer, Gus O'Donnell, to a long-arranged farewell lunch at the Savoy. What ought to have been a convivial occasion turned out to be almost as disastrous as the more famous farewell dinner at No 10. Holborow, still seething at the Tories' attempt to blame him for Lady Caithness's death, spent much of the meal jabbing his finger at the hapless O'Donnell and haranguing him loudly.

IT IS hard to believe that any more scandals could possibly be threatening the Tory party — but some top officials are keeping an anxious eye on the second of the big BCCI fraud trials, in which Mr Nazmudin Virani is accused among other things of signing bogus documents which allowed the crooked bank to overstate its profits by some £20m.

Mr Virani's former company, Control Securities, was an enormous conglomerate of hotels and property enterprises, hailed by many Tories as a classic example of the successes of free enterprise in the 1980s. Mr Virani was much courted by top Tories in the hunt for funds. Mr Kenneth Baker, when chairman of the party and home secretary, was specially happy in Virani's company. In September 1991, for instance, Virani hosted a lavish function in Nottingham at which the grinning Baker was guest of honour. A few days later Virani was himself guest of honour at Dorneywood, the magnificent grace and favour home then occupied by Baker. Among the guests were the editor of the Times — and the prime minister, John Major. The following month, Virani attended the Tory conference at Blackpool where he paid for another lavish reception for the "One Nation" forum. There are many top Tories who hope that Mr Virani won't take the same silly approach to his prosecution as did Mr Asil Nadir, who circulated to the press the exact amounts he had contributed to the Tories.

Even if he does so, the Tories are ready with their defence: that Virani also helped the Liberals and their leader Paddy Ashdown — and even contributed a small sum (£2,500) to the Labour party.

TORY MPs queued up last week to denounce George Galloway for his trip to Iraq and then roared with approval when the prime minister condemned Saddam Hussein for "oppressing the Kurds" and "denying basic human rights".

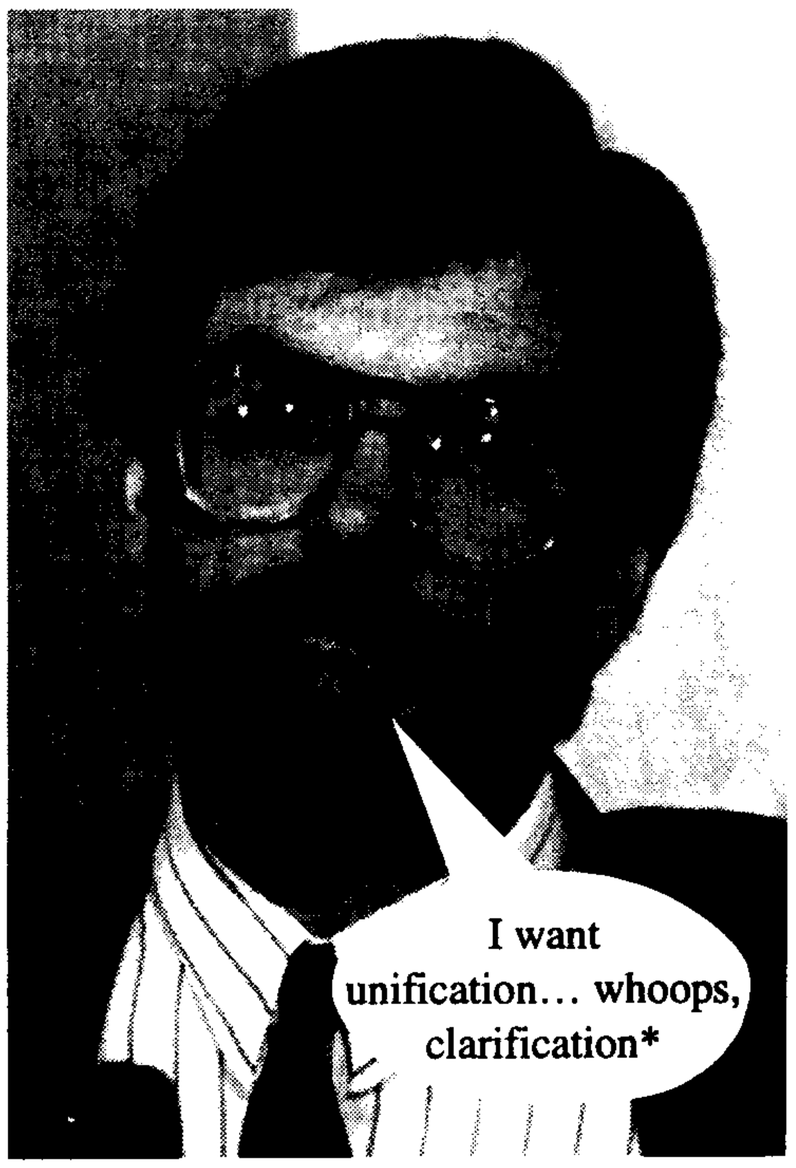
To loud cheers Major added: "There is, frankly, nothing to be said for him [Saddam] — and nothing should be said for him by any member of this house."

Memories on the government benches are clearly getting shorter and shorter: in the late 1980s any number of Tory MPs were willing to go and shake hands with the Butcher of Baghdad.

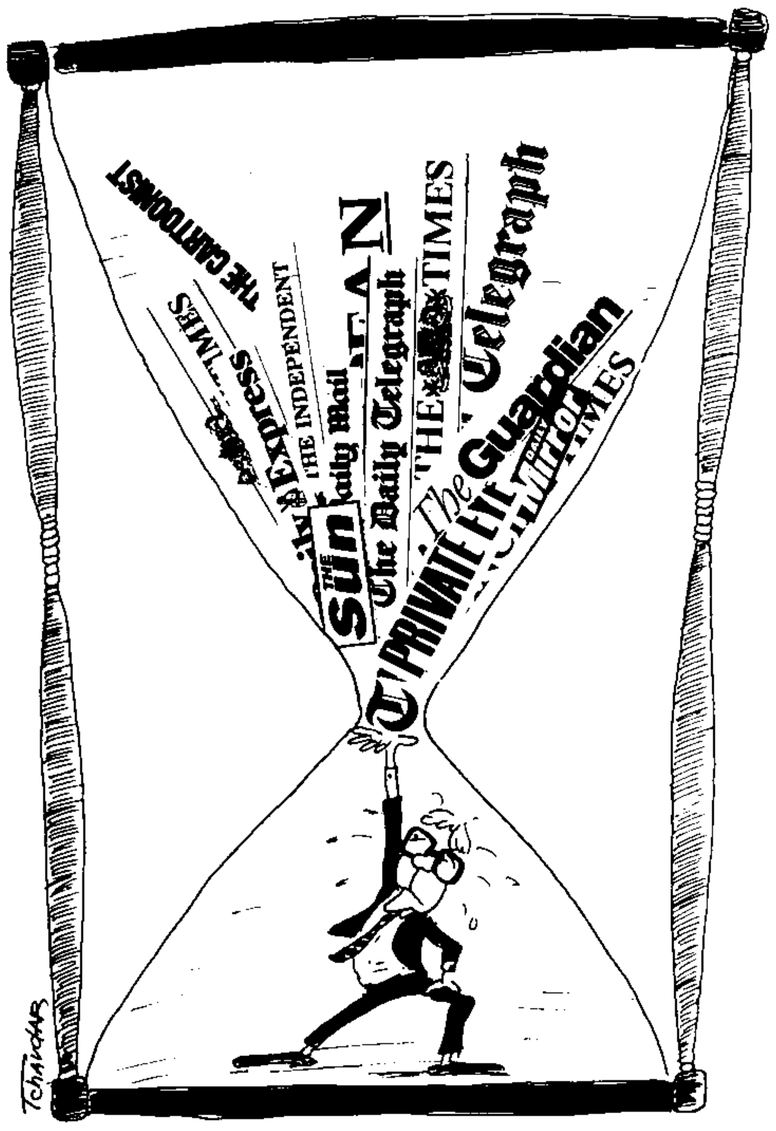
In February 1988, for instance, Saddam was visited by a group that included Tony Marlow, Robert Adley (decd.), Michael Brown, Nick Budgen, Robert Hicks, Roger Moate and Richard Page. Suitably encouraged by this diplomatic show of solidarity, Saddam gassed the Kurds at Hakabja less than a month later. In the following year, the list of Tories enjoying Iraq's hospitality included Hugh Dykes, Anthony Nelson, Tim Smith, Timothy Wood and, once again, Tony Marlow.

But this scandal pales into insignificance when one recalls that in November 1988 a deal was signed to extend £340 million in trade credits to the gasser of the Kurds and the persecutor of the marsh Arabs. The treasury minister in charge of the export credits guarantee department was the chief secretary: John Major. Perhaps, as so often, he didn't see the paperwork.

ADAMS LATEST



*(*This bubble was spoken by an actor)*



STREET OF SHAME

BELEAGUERED management at City Road must be impressed by the way Chris Huhne, less-than-saintly business editor of the *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*, is making maximum use of the company's meagre and dwindling resources.

Huhne's latest masterstroke was to engage ex-*European* hack John Phelps as deputy business new editor on the *Indy*, only to fire him five weeks later, thereby forcing his financially challenged employer to pay Phelps the best part of half a year's salary for slightly more than a month's work.

With business acumen like that, Huhne will feature large in the plans of the papers' new investors, whomsoever they may be.

THE *Daily Torygraph* has been careful not to sound too censorious about MPs' private lives during the moral panic over "Back to Basic Instincts".

Harangues against adulterers would sit uneasily upon the shoulders of that beacon of tolerance Max Hastings, whose marriage broke up over his relationship with Penny Grade, ex-wife of Michael Grade. (Not that *The Sun* desisted from sanctimony after its erstwhile editor, Kelvin Mackenzie, was discovered in a steamy tropical paradise with a gorgeous, pouting blonde to whom he was not married.)

Also, the *Torygraph*'s new columnist Niall Ferguson, an Oxford don, is soon to be the father of a child outside wedlock by the associate editor of the *Sunset Times*, Sue Douglas. In these circumstances Ferguson can doubtless be relied upon to exercise restraint on matters of morality and family values in his column.

JUST FANCY THAT

ON 17 January the pisspoor *Daily Mirror* at last had a big story, splashed all over pages 1 and 2. The paper's so-called "investigative reporter", Peter Hounam, "exclusively" revealed that Angela Heylin, a PR tycoon appointed by John Major to the Citizen's Charter advisory panel last year, was herself being accused of shoddy behaviour towards customers following the 1992 collapse of her PR company, Charles Barker.

Within hours of going into receivership, Hounam explained, Heylin had been allowed to buy back Charles Barker at a bargain basement price while ridding herself of the obligation to pay off any of the firm's debts. Hounam added that the PR Consultants Association had complained to the government about her conduct.

This news was described by Hounam as a "bombshell", which had been brought to light by "a *Daily Mirror* investigation". Odd, really: for the whole story first appeared in the *Eye* on 10 September 1993.

JUST IN CASE you missed it, the "National Crime Debate" was launched last week by the *Daily Mirror* in an unusual alliance with *Tribune*.

It was supposed to be inspired by a desire to abolish crime and had nothing to do with the wish of the *Mirror* to save its "relationship with the Labour Party" (see *Eye* 836). The fight, said the *Mirror* earnestly in an editorial, "should be above party politics and opportunistic fix-its". To show that it was non-political, the chief speaker was Tony Blair, Labour's shadow home secretary.

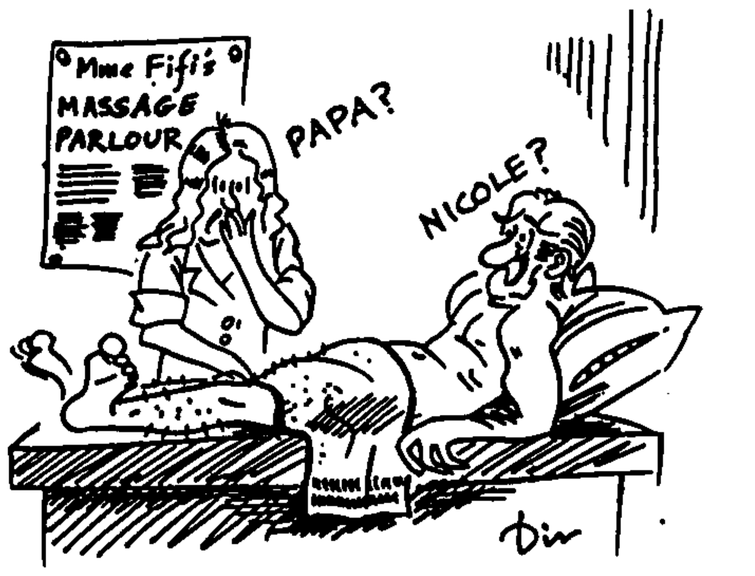
The conference was held in a hall with seating for 156 and standing room for another 50 or more. This was over-generous. The audience totalled 47 included four television crews complete with cameramen, sound recordists, lighting engineers, producers and researchers, plus three newspaper photographers and an unknown number of reporters.

Blair spoke for 15 minutes and when he sat down received no applause at all (possibly because everyone there was a professional). Chairwoman Zeinab Badawi appealed to the audience to move forward so that they were bunched in front of the cameras. There was a huge stack of free copies of the *Daily Mirror* available; most were still there at the end of the show.

A BIZARRE article in the *Sun* on 14 January — "WHY I GAVE UP SMUT TO BE A CARE WORKER **- by ex-*Sunday Sport* editor Ian Pollock" — has delighted portly Pillock's former boss, porn baron David "The Slug" Sullivan.**

Pillock told the *Sun* he had taken a £42,000 pay cut to start a new career "caring for adults with learning difficulties" — not so very different from editing the *Sport*, one might think. Gone were the "bevies of busty beauties", the "stream of invitations to raunchy parties", the £50,000 salary and the "company Jaguar" (actually a Peugeot 405 diesel, but never mind). But Pillock had no regrets. "I had to move for my own peace of mind," he bleated.

How odd, then, that Pillock is currently claiming damages from Sullivan for constructive dismissal, following his abrupt departure from the editor's chair last September. In view of his insistence in the *Sun* that "money was the least of my priorities", the Slug will presumably feel free to ignore any future begging letters from Pillock's lawyers.



THE YEAR'S sickest advertising stunt so far comes from the *Birmingham Evening Mail*. It has written to dozens of junior and infant schools promoting an "editorial feature" on truancy planned to cash in on the James Bulger tragedy.

The feature, said the letter, would illustrate the dangers of truancy — and suggested ominously that no school would want to be seen not joining the fight against truancy, especially after the Bulger case. After all, said the letter, it could happen to any school.

The rag then demanded £75 to include each school's crest on the page carrying the article. Several outraged heads have complained to the press complaints commission.

ARTS NEWS

THE Arts Council has come up with an ingenious wheeze to save the jobs threatened by Peter Brooke. Originally, the ministerial diktat seemed likely to slice 34 jobs off the Council's plump bureaucracy. Even after some industrious shuffling of old jobs into new ones, there were still 24 staff at Great Peter Street who seemed likely to be left in the cold.

In the nick of time, however, the selfsame Peter Brooke has also given the Arts Council the job of distributing money for the arts from the National Lottery, and the Council is setting up a Lottery Unit to do the job.

A casual observer might expect that this unit would be much like the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, set up by the football pools companies to give money to good cultural causes in an attempt to stave off the establishment of the lottery. The Foundation, which distributes about £80 million a year, has a staff of just two people.

But no. The Arts Council has decided that its lottery unit will need to employ all of 25 people to perform the task — one more than the number of jobs to be shed under Brooke's demand for cuts. So there won't actually be any job losses at all; there will be one new vacancy instead, for the £45,000-a-year post of lottery director.

All these new jobs will, of course, be paid for out of the proceeds of the lottery. Once the lottery operators have taken their profit as well, and the government has grabbed its 12 per cent tax, will there be any cash left for the arts? Perhaps not. But people buying lottery tickets can at least have the warm glow of knowing that they have helped the Arts Council solve its redundancy problem.

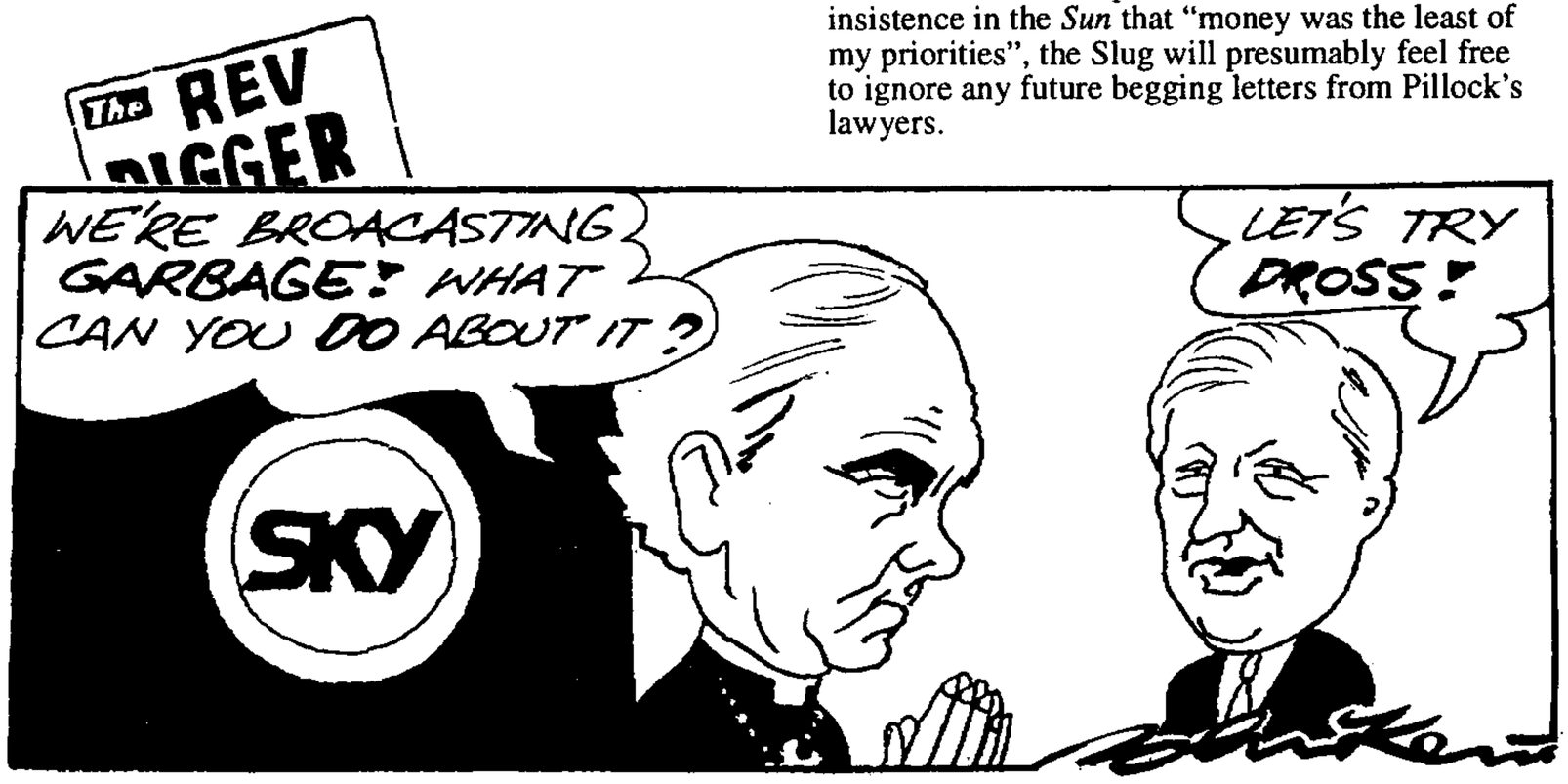
HUNT NEWS

HOME SECRETARY Michael Howard plans to introduce new offences with which to prosecute hunt saboteurs, carrying fines up to £2,500 or three-month prison sentences.

Yet in the last few years the clear majority of criminal convictions or civil awards for acts of violence associated with hunting haye been against hunt *supporters*, not saboteurs.

Recently two terriermen with the Essex Farmers and Union hunt were convicted of violent disorder and affray for their attacks on hunt saboteurs during a meet last year. Their sentences were 120 and 160 hours of community service respectively.

These sentences, taken in combination with others, suggest either that hunt supporters convicted of violent assaults are being treated too leniently — or that hunt saboteurs soon to be convicted of criminal trespass will be treated too harshly.



HALLO!

The new heartwarming column

HALLO! AUTUMN will be even more autumnal than usual this year: for *Hallo!* has been informed that Prince Charles's divorce from the lovely Diana is to be announced in November.

This will be sad news for millions of people — not least David Dimbleby, who is making a BBC series of programmes about the future of the monarchy, due to be transmitted that very month. We can only hope that some kind soul will tip him off, so he can make the necessary adjustments.

One person who could tell him is his brother Jonathan, who is also making a television programme about Charles and has recently become one of his closest confidants. We are delighted to hear that Jonathan's documentary will be entirely adulatory, with none of the vulgarity or disrespect that are, alas, the hallmarks of so much royal coverage these days. There will also, thank goodness, be no mention of the name Camilla.

"Oh my God — Judy's cut off Mr Punch's penis!"

HALLO! IN AN increasingly vulgar world, it is encouraging that the House of Commons is graced by the presence of the refined and elegant MP for Sutton and Cheam, Lady Olga Maitland, who is well-known for her staunch support of family values.

When all around were rushing to criticise the unfortunate Mr Yeo, how refreshing it was to see Lady Olga loyalling defending her intensely able colleague and friend on *Newsnight*! It must have been distressing for Lady Olga, however, to have been misrepresented by her constituents' local paper, the *Sutton News*, only the day before. For some inexplicable reason, the newspaper quoted her as saying Mr Yeo should have resigned last summer.

Lady Olga's constituents know, however, that their MP is a woman of her word. When she was selected as candidate for the area before the 1992 election she made a promise to the Sutton and Cheam Conservative Association that she would move out of her lovely home in Islington and find a house in the constituency. Alas, Lady Olga's house-hunting has so far been without success. We do wish her well in her continuing search!

HALLO! *WE ARE all greatly looking forward to the publication in April of the second volume of Sir Nicholas Fairbairn's memoirs, dealing with his parliamentary career.*

He promises to lay bare some of the saucy secrets of Westminster, including the story of the respectable and married right-wing Tory MP who was reported to have died at his desk in his Commons office, whereas he had in fact died while "getting back to basics" with his secretary! Resourceful as ever, the secretary dressed his corpse and placed him in a slumped position over his desk before phoning the local constabulary at Cannon Row.

What a wag Nicky is! His briefcase bears the engraved initials "FoF", which, depending on who you listen to, stand for Fairbairn of Fordell (after his Scottish castle) or "Fond of Fucking". Surely not. But he says that he has no truck with the prime minister's unfortunate moral crusade. He says: "One plays chess with a thousand people in the course of one's life, one plays golf with a thousand people, so why shouldn't one fuck a thousand people? It's ridiculous that fucking should be the only physical contact activity which is supposed to be performed with one other person." Nicky, you really are such a hoot!

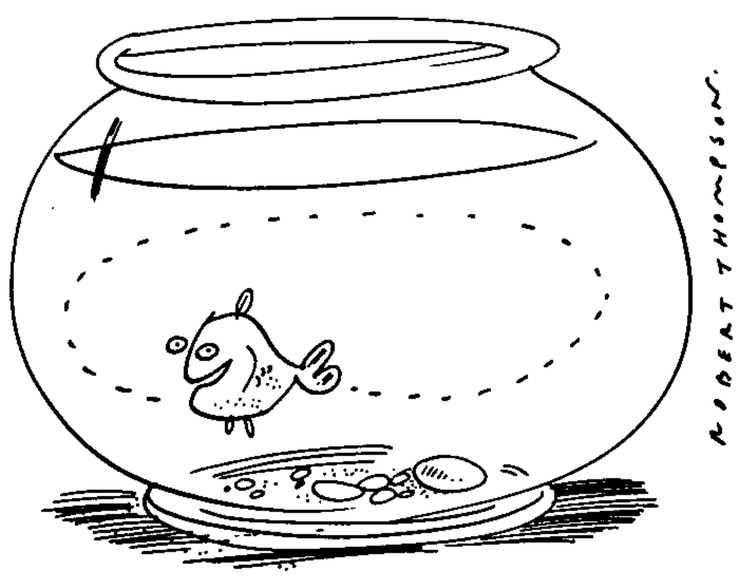
HALLO! FORMER environment minister Tim Yeo is such a charmer. Last November, before the story about his touching love-affair with elegant solicitor Julia Stent broke, he visited the Phoenix Community Garden in Covent Garden, which had won a £500 award from the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers.

While being shown around the garden by one of the project's organisers, Malena Griffiths, he had something more important on his mind than the beautiful woodland scene in the heart of London's theatreland. He turned to his companion while photographers snapped away and exclaimed gallantly: "Ohhhh, you're so attractive!"

Ms. Griffiths tells me, ungratefully, that she felt inclined to knee him in the groin, but he had not yet handed over the cheque. It is so sad that some modern young women do not recognise a real gentleman when they meet one!

HALLO! *WHO are the cynical pessimists who have been crowing over the fact that my sprightly, octagenarian sailing companion Peter Carter-Fuck was found to have issued a false statement on behalf of Tory MP Gary Waller? They have been whispering it about that he is "the liar's friend", but anyone would think that dear Peter had some choice in the matter.*

Whoever they are, these whelps, they need to learn a little more respect for our great British legal system. Don't they appreciate that a solicitor must always assume that his client is telling the truth until it is proven otherwise?



"Round, round, get around, I get around, yeh, get around, ooh I get around..."

"He owes his success to his first wife and his second wife to his success"

HALLO! MY HEART goes out to poor Steven Berkoff. The most talented luminary of the British theatre is suffering the sniggers of members of the gutter press over a suggestion that he is afflicted by the same distressing pancreatic condition which featured in the recent Gillian Taylforth libel case.

Last autumn, Steven was visited by *Sunday Times Magazine* freelance Chrissy Iley for an interview in Dublin. After the encounter, over lunch in Berkoff's room at the Westbury hotel, Iley claimed to others that she felt "horribly used", explaining that Steven had demanded that she perform first-aid after he was smitten by an attack of pancreatitis, and that she had felt obliged to obey.

This came to the attention of senior executives on the paper, including editor Andrew Neill and deputy-editor Ivan Fallon, who has been something of a champion of Iley's. An internal investigation is still underway.

Steven explains that at the end of the interview Iley had asked for a copy of his collected plays, that he had decided to lie down because he was feeling poorly, and that she had sat on the bed beside him while browsing through the book and letting her hand fall across his knee, whereupon he took the hint.

Steven was not happy with the tone of Iley's article when it appeared. Overwrought with emotion, he was talked into penning something of a diatribe against her in a small-circulation magazine under the heading "The venomous slag who killed my soul". Iley is described as a harridan, a verbal medusa, a bleary venomous hag, a lazy slut, a palpable neuro, a blob of female spleen, a tarty nouveau scribbler, culturally moronic, like a pigeon that feeds on dog shit, etc. Halfway through the article there is a reference to her first-aid skills: "Hardly knowing a thing about me" she proceeded "like a glutton to have a quick gulp".

All those who know Steven will recognise that such indelicate sentiments and language are out of character, and that really it was all in jest. I for one will be sending him a get-well card.

HALLO! *ALL THIS awkwardness involving Steven Berkoff reminds me of another occasion, when he was being interviewed by that fragrant novelist Kate Saunders.*

They were enjoying tea at a famous London hotel when Mr Berkoff jokingly announced that he was in a state of tumescence and asked what on earth she was going to do about it. "Does it take milk and sugar?" she wittily inquired, ensuring rapid detumescence.

The Marquesa

"THE day belonged to Mr Major," wrote Kevin Brown in the *Financial Times* (18 January), perhaps the most sycophantic of all the newspapers to report the Scott Inquiry hearings into Iraqgate. Almost all the rest of the media agreed with Brown's assessment of Major's performance in front of Scott: "He looked well-briefed and aware of the strong points of the case."

The desperate desire to acquit the prime minister of any involvement either in Iraqgate or its cover-up overlooked some testimony from a less famous person which made nonsense of at least one crucial part of Major's evidence.

Major wants us to believe that throughout his short reign at the Foreign Office he knew nothing about the guidelines for the embargo on British arms for Saddam Hussein's Iraq. He told Scott he did not notice when Mr John Goulden, who was assistant secretary at the Foreign Office, told a House of Commons committee early in 1992 that one of the guidelines had been changed in 1988 — to allow much more British arms-related equipment and machinery into Baghdad.

So when the shit hit the fan with the Matrix Churchill case in November 1992 (when three business executives were declared not guilty of exporting military equipment to Iraq on the grounds that they were carrying out government policy) Major told John Smith that the embargo guidelines had been exactly the same since 1985.

What about John Goulden's categorical statement to the Commons that one of the guidelines had been changed? Asked repeatedly about this at the inquiry, Major said he had ordered a "most throrough" inquiry, which lasted a whole weekend (23/24 November 1992) and which involved "massive research". This research had coveniently revealed that the guidelines had been changed, that Goulden had been wrong, and that Major had been right.

On Friday 22 January the man responsible for this "massive research", one Nicholas Bevan, appeared in front of Scott. As assistant secretary (commitments) at the Ministry of Defence, he had given evidence (twice) at the Commons select committee inquiry into Supergun. What was the "massive research" carried out that November weekend, asked the judge. Mr Bevan replied that he had studied "one volume" containing two Foreign Office files. This persuaded him that the guidelines hadn't been changed. He reported this to his boss at the Cabinet Office, Pauline Neville-Jones, who wrote an incomprehensible minute saying the guidelines hadn't been changed at all, and there was no need for the prime minister to go back on what he'd told John Smith. Thus the "massive research" claimed by Major turned out to be the reading of a couple of files, which had enough in them to enable the Cabinet Office to exculpate their boss from the charge that he deceived the Commons.

Neville-Jones's confidential minute letting Major off the hook was admitted that the "course" she recommended (sticking to the myth that the guidelines were not changed) was "not hazard-free". One "problem" was Mr John Goulden, who had said so plainly in the Commons that a guideline had been changed. Somewhere along the line, the decision was taken to dump Goulden and leave him to stew in his own public assurance. Perhaps to salve a few consciences, Goulden was promoted to be ambassador to Turkey. Another interesting promotion was that of Pauline Neville-Jones, first to the job of secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee then, on the prime minister's personal insistence, to be political director of the foreign office. This is a new post created specially for the prime minister's "fixer" at the FO. Neville-Jones will accompany Major on all his trips abroad. Presumably Major feels that if she can get him out of the Iraqgate mess she can get him out of anything. Nicholas Bevan, meanwhile, has become secretary to the Speaker of the Commons, where he assiduously deflects any nasty MPs' questions on Iraqgate.

Will Ambassador Goulden lie down and take this treatment? Or will he appear before Scott to point out that his assurance that the guidelines had changed was made after consultation not just at the Foreign Office but also with the Ministry of Defence and the Cabinet Office — in other words, that his evidence, now rubbished by Major's office, had actually passed through that same office and been agreed by it?

MEANWHILE, Scott is still boiling at the assault on him by Lord Howe, former foreign secretary, who denounced him for being detective, judge and jury in his own court.

So fantastic was Howe's outburst that no one noticed his actual evidence. The most remarkable aspect of this was Howe's gushing support for his former boss Margaret Thatcher. Howe was asked about the widespread rumour in the Foreign Office when he was in charge that Jordan was used as a conduit for British arms exports to Iraq, against which country Howe himself had announced an arms embargo.

When Howe was asked whether the rumour had come to his attention, he replied: "It never reached me in any formidable shape." Scott said it seemed to him "strange" that the foreign secretary should not have heard "a whisper" of something which was tittle tattle all over the FO. Lord Howe's reply was remarkable, even by the standards of sycophancy and humbug prevailing among Thatcher's former ministers:

"I do not recollect being triggered [about the Jordan conduit of arms to Iraq]," he said, "because I think I was constantly exposed to the extreme courtesy and charm of the people themselves — I have never met a more courteous and impressive individual than the King of Jordan — and the most marvellous sight in the world is to see Mrs Thatcher and King Hussein dealing with each other, because they sought to outstrip each other in courtesy — 'Your Majesty' and 'Ma'am' and everything — it was an amazing sight and he was extraordinarily good at it. I had this impression of a man of huge interity..."

Marvellous though it was, this drivel failed to convince anyone who heard it, alas, that Jordan had not been a conduit for embargo-breaking British arms to Iraq.

Most Scott observers are predicting that His Excellency will be brought post haste from Ankara to answer Scott's questions, and will be only too keen to do so.

LABOUR MPs were gobsmacked to hear Jack Cunningham, the shadow foreign secretary, complaining on the radio that gorgeous George Galloway, chum of Saddam Hussein, had disgraced himself by going on a foreign trip when, with the breakdown of the usual channels and the absence of pairing, every other Labour MP was back in the Commons voting against the government. After all, the only other absentee Labour MP was, er, Jack Cunningham, who went on a jaunt to Hong Kong.

Arriving back in Britain for a shadow cabinet meeting Cunningham said that "over a banquet" he had been impressed with the arguments of the governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, over the future of the colony. At this, shadow cabinet thug John Prescott, for whom the word "banquet" used to mean cleaning up the vomit of passengers on ocean liners when he was a ship's steward, exploded. He demanded to know why Labour were supporting Patten when for 100 years no Tory had ever shown any interest in democracy in Hong Kong. So virulent was Prescott's attack that Labour leader John Smith summed up by saying that Labour should perhaps soften its support for Patten and the government.

JAMES PAWSEY, Tory MP for Rugby and Kenilworth, is wandering around the Commons with a hang-dog expression after being made to look a complete prat.

Pawsey, a name in the Merrett Syndicate 418 (1985) at Lloyds, faces huge losses. On 5 January he wrote to a number of MPs saying "I understand that we are all names involved with Merrett Syndicate 418 (1985)". He went on to suggest a meeting to enable the MPs "to decide some form of common policy". The letter was sent to Tory MPs Phillip Oppenheim, Richard Shepherd, Roger Knapman and Anthony Grant and to Labour MPs Giles Radice and Brian Sedgemore.

Radice wrote to Pawsey on 7 January in time-honoured fashion: "I am afraid there must be some mistake. I am certainly not a name with Merrett Syndicate 418 (1985) at Lloyds." Sedgemore, who specialises in exposing fraud and corruption at Lloyds, replied on 13 January: "I am not a name at Lloyds and never have been. I regard your letter as being seriously libellous in that it suggests that I am a man of substance who is anxious to get something for nothing in this life." Further enquiries reveal that Oppenheim is not a member of the Merrett Syndicate; nor is Shepherd. The position of the others is unclear.

So where did Pawsey get his duff information from? According to Tory MPs he was set up by someone at Lloyds who thinks he is a whingeing pest. However, on the verge of tears, he told a Labour MP that the information came from fellow Tory MP Neil Hamilton. Since Hamilton is a minister of the Crown at the DTI, which oversees Lloyds, this clearly cannot be true. We must assume that Pawsey was delirious when he tried to put the blame on him.

IT WAS nice to see Chris Smith, Labour's environmental whizz-kid, make a superb speech to the PLP on the party's green credentials. Normally cynical MPs listened spellbound.

Then some awkward sod spoilt everything by asking about Thorp, the new nuclear reprocessing plant at Seascale which no serious environmentalist could support. The best that Smith could come up with, perhaps mindful of the need to bolster the electoral fortunes of Jack Cunningham MP, whose constituents work at the poisonous BNFL plant, was that future monitoring of the plant should not be characterised by the same secrecy as now exists.

Somehow, it seemed, this particular green dream had suffered a rude awakening.

SCHOOL governors balloting parents on whether to opt out of local authority control have been approached by a Lincolnshire firm called Schools Support Services.

According to the firm's brochure, it can guide schools through the "worrying time" of an opt-out ballot, avoiding "needless anxiety". The interesting bit is in the section headed "Our fees", which states: "All of our services can be charged against Department for Education transitional funding and if you are not incorporated for any reason they are waived." In other words, taxpayers' money will be used to reward this private company for getting the right (*sic*) result in ballots on whether schools should opt out of the state system.

'Backbiter'

THE future of the Tim Yeo Ladies Bowls Cup, competed for annually between Haverhill and Risbygate, Bury St Edmunds, is now in the balance after the recent turmoil.

Haverhill Echo

NOOKS and CORNERS

TIRESOME listed buildings can often be destroyed in one fell swoop — with a nice big fire, say. But sometimes, despite accidental fires, deliberate dereliction and decay, it can take *years* to get them down. It just requires patience on the part of the owners.

A good example is St Erkenwald's, Southend, an optimistic anglo-Catholic shrine for Essex Man, which was made redundant in 1978. Only now has obliging Southend borough council given permission for its demolition. In between lies a sad tale of the dissipation and sabotage of positive effort to make good use of this once lovely church.

St Erk's was begun in 1905. It is a noble, spare monument of the later phase of the Gothic Revival designed by Sir Walter Tapper, later surveyor to York Minster and architect to the Gas Light & Coke Company. Tapper is, I know, scarcely a household name today, but he was a scholarly and refined designer who was commissioned by the Church of England when it was a civilized institution containing clergy who could be trusted with objects of beauty. The lovely metal screens in the transepts of York Minster are his work.

Having been closed, St Erk's was sold in the mid-1980s. It was first proposed as an arts centre, but when that idea failed it was sold again to its current owners, two model Essex Men: Mr K. Walter and Mr P. Beatty of Benfleet. These would-be developers applied to demolish the building. When this was refused, they made three applications to cut up the interior into flats: all refused.

The Southend and District Building Preservation Trust, in contrast, tried hard to find an appropriate use which would not require the mutilation of its interior. The church's architectural importance was confirmed by its belated listing, at Grade II, but meanwhile its condition continued to deteriorate — a process encouraged by the removal of all the slates from the roof by its owners.

Encouraged by the SDBPT, Southend borough council eventually served a repairs notice on the owners. Then an unfortunate thing happened. On 9 November 1992, shortly after the owners had been on the roof making repairs with felt, the roof caught fire. The culprit was a blow-lamp, that infernal device which has also caused fires at the Vyne and St Mary-at-Hill in similar tragic accidents. It was especially unfortunate at St Erk's as it was the second fire to break out in a matter of weeks.

Fortunately the damage was not as bad as first feared and the Southend and District Building Preservation Trust continued to press ahead with its own plan for the building to be divided to serve both

as a ballroom and as a Greek Orthodox Church — a singularly apposite use. But, although opposed by its own officers, Southend borough council has thrown in the sponge and approved the owners' application to demolish St Erk's.

This is not yet the end. The department of national heritage is being asked to hold a public inquiry, as it surely must, while English Heritage is prepared to finance a comprehensive feasibility study on one of Southend's few distinguished landmarks. But this is an instructive saga, and a foretaste of things to come. For as the Church of England continues to decline into an introverted sect run by George Carey's clap-happies, many, many more superb Anglo-Catholic churches — supreme monuments of ecclesiastical art and among the best Victorian and Edwardian buildings in Britain — will be found surplus to requirements and disposed of. The future is bleak.

AT LEAST some threatened listed buildings are still performing valuable functions. A kind reader who frequents telephone kiosks has sent me a copy of an interesting advertisement. "SWEDISH MASSAGE CENTRE," it reads; "Attractive masseuses... waiting to pamper YOU! Jacuzzi in Private Room. Swedish Massage Centre, 1-2 Poultry, London EC4... £5 discount with this card" (which, alas, I was not sent).

Now what interests me is the address, for "No 1 Poultry" is, of course, the generic name for the unique collection of eight listed Victorian commercial buildings which the hereditary "property developer" and discredited butcher of London's orchestras, My Lord Palumbo, has been trying to demolish for as long as most of us can remember.

This generous donor to Conservative party funds has now, after long, long struggles against his reactionary foes** (Eyes passim ad nauseam), **secured all his necessary permissions and demolition will, I fear, begin soon. Most of the property has long been kept empty to make it look more forlorn, and Mappin & Webb's will soon depart.

But the Swedish Massage Centre happily still makes use of this prime site. Will it be rehoused in the new "Wireless Set" designed by the late Sir James Stirling which is to rise on the site? It is, after all, the sort of facility that deeply stressed City gents really need, and certainly one that the late lamented "Big Jim" might have enjoyed. But not the ever-so-cultured former chairman of the Arts Council, surely?

'Piloti'

"No one buys a Big Mac for the simple reason of eating it," says Michael R.Steele, an anthropologist who has written an essay about McDonalds. "The behaviour is part of an entire gestalt in which the consumer participates on a subliminal level. The purchase of a Big Mac involves a deep interior perception of self, family, country and socio-economic status."

The Times

Working with myth and fairytale

A day workshop with Nick Owen BA, Co-director, Oxford School of Psychotherapy and Counselling Ltd

This workshop will use stories brought along by participants to focus on people's individuation processes, at the same time allowing all group members to be aware of their connectedness on a very profound level.

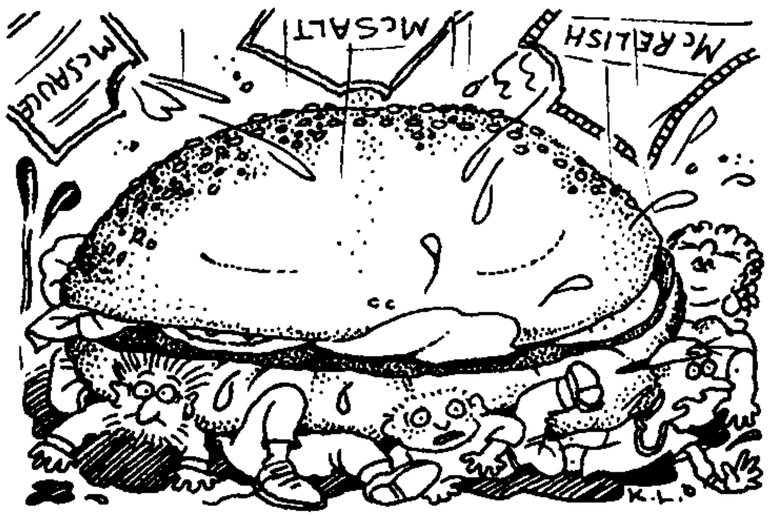
Advertisement

Last summer we discovered that she was going to be quite near where we go every year to our folly. Marina who is wonderfully innocent and unafraid of saying old-fashioned things, wrote to me saying, "How strange that in the whole of France we should be holidaying so close," unaware that in August the whole of north London decamps to Lot et Garonne. We met several times, and went on a picnic to Gavaudin.

There's a piece in the book where she describes the relationship of a ladle to a ladder. The ladle is one made out of wire. No doubt she uses the proper words — interstitial space or something — but she talks about the gaps. And when she'd written it I said, "That's just amazing what you said about the ladle and the ladder. I'd never seen it." And she said, in this very *distrait* way: "Isn't the creative process *extraordinary*?" To her in was dead obvious, but I shuffled towards my conclusions.

RICHARD WENTWORTH
& MARINA WARNER
"How We Met" — Independent On Sunday

Pseuds Corner



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RICHARD WENTWORTH
& MARINA WARNER
"How We Met" — Independent On Sunday

For the poet, smoking is "the all-but-perfect sacrifice of matter to the sublimity of smoke", smoke which, like the soul, "ghostlike in its wreaths and wraiths", strikes us as a "substance less dense than matter, more corporeal than mind". And, for a soldier or an aeroplane traveller or anyone finding himself in proximity to (real or imagined) physical danger, it's "with gratitude and love that one holds, between fingers and lips, the small, compact cylinder of paper and tobacco (cinder, ash, fire) like worry beads, rosary or some other divine consoler". Ah, how true, sighs the 30-a-day reviewer.

GILBERT ADAIR
Sunday Times

Strange Rites
Dance — An Interpretive Challenge
Inaugural Lecture by Professor Janet Lansdale

The problems of establishing an academic discipline of dance studies are discussed in relation to border tensions in disciplinary structures in a postmodern world.

Interpretation, and in particular, the notion of intertextuality, is addressed through a number of strange dance rites.

University of Surrey

CONTRIBUTORS: R.Daubeny, J.Barton, Everyone, M.Meyer, S.Cooper.

£10 paid for entries

ETV

Home Truths (BBC1)

The Unpleasant World Of Penn And Teller (C4)

THE entertainment industry shares with horticulture and stud-farming an obsession with hybrids and cross-breeding. It has long been said that new movie ideas are best pitched in Hollywood as if they were flowers or racehorses: "It's *Ghost* out of *Basic Instinct*" or "It's like a black *Fatal Attraction* crossed with *In The Line of Fire*".

This practice of imaginative pitching has obviously spread to television. *Home Truths*, the first television vehicle for Radio 1's new breakfast DJ Steve Wright, is a bizarre attempt to combine elements of several top-rating series within the same format.

Talking itself up a hundred times more daring than it is, the series promises to expose the "best-kept secrets" of celebrities. The first three guests were Jonathan Ross, Diane Abbott MP, and Alan "Fluff" Freeman. Given the Fluff's recent past includes hospitalisation after an unfortunate miscalculation with painkillers, and that many have speculated on the sex-life of Ms Abbott, they seemed promising material for what sounded like a TV version of *National Inquirer* magazine.

But, in fact, all that happened was that five anodyne "facts" were read out about each guest, of which two were untrue. For points, the other two panellists had to spot the fibs. The little Jonathan Ross wore his mum's tights on his morning paper round? True. Freeman was an extra in a James Bond film? False.

Realising that this "idea" lacked the legs for a 30 minute show, the producers nervously borrowed padding from established entertainment hits. Old ma Ross burst out of the set doors to tell a mildly-cheeky anecdote about her son. Thank you, *This Is Your Life*. Home videos showed the panellists in domestic embarrassments. Good on you, *You've Been Framed*. Finally, to fill up the last five minutes, the guests answer questions against the clock on a pet topic: "Diane Abbott, you have one minute on the novels of Alice Walker." Thank you, bizarrely enough, *Mastermind*.

"It's Tony Slattery's answering machine"

The show is so tacky that some will inevitably give it the derisive tag of "tabloid television". But, in fact, and perhaps ruinously for its ratings chances, tabloid television is precisely what it isn't. At 7pm on a Friday, the show ought to be attracting precisely the kind of people who read the tabloid press, but phrases about the "best-kept secrets of the stars" mean, to such an audience, genuinely dirty little secrets. Purporting to wash dirty linen in public, *Home Truths* in fact invites celebrities willingly to reveal their mildly snotty handkerchiefs. Indeed, the format is so dishonest that it is quite possible to imagine David Mellor, that all-purpose panellist, taking part, and his "secret" being a collection of unusual stamps.

Home Truths premiered on the very day that Kelvin McKenzie retired from *The Sun* to go and head BSkyB. This conjunction serves to remind the BBC that, if shows likes this are its conception of downmarket popular entertainment, it's going to get a ratings shock.

Channel 4's new downmarket entertainment series, *The Unpleasant World of Penn And Teller*, is another unfortunate attempt at "post-modernist" television. Anyone who believes that the artistic concept of post-modernism is usually an excuse for not being very good at what you do will have their prejudices confirmed by Penn & Teller, two American performers who are what might be described as alternative magicians. Anyone who believes that the cultural description "alternative" generally means alternative to talented will also have their prejudices confirmed.

The second show began with a smug dig at *The Paul Daniels Magic Show*, to which this is a radical alternative, but Square Eyes was shouting "Bring on Debbie McGee" after only a few minutes. The new elements Penn and Teller introduce to magic are mock-incompetence and mock-cruelty. There is a white rabbit trick, but it ends with fur and blood spurting out of a thresher. Penn & Teller solemnly swear on a bible that there will be no magic depending on "camera tricks", but then transparently break their pledge when the bibles turn into birds. Very post-modernist, but, much as this column hates to stand up for Paul Daniels, he would simply not get away with being so sloppy.

Ol' Square Eyes

I-BSkyB

IRA prisoners in the Maze already enjoy privileges unheard of in mainland jails: single cells, individual television sets and home leave at Christmas. On their latest list of demands, a few lines below political status, a new item appears: Sky satellite dishes. To watch those All-Ireland sporting fixtures no doubt.

Times Diary

CONTRIBUTOR: Martin E. Gunson

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

MEDIA NEWS

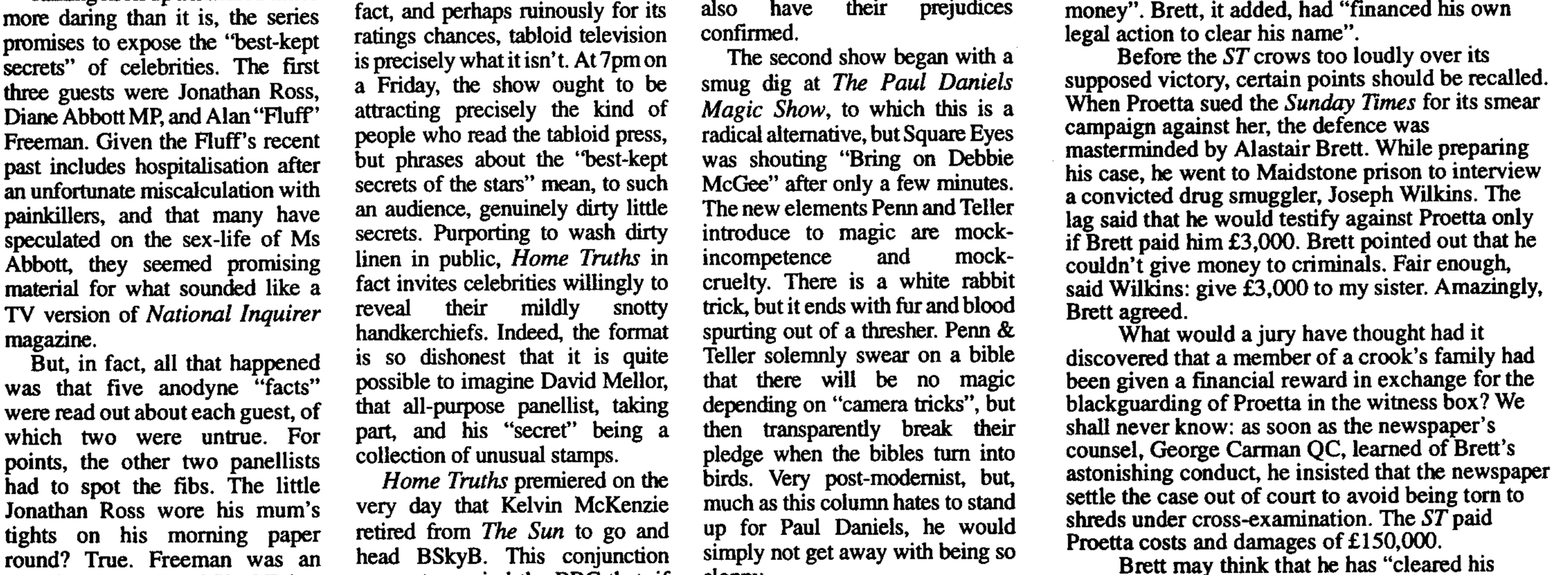
YEARS after the event, the *Sunset Times* is *still* trying to justify its notorious coverage of the Gibraltar killings in 1988, when it attacked Carmen Proetta and the makers of *Death on the Rock*.

The latest chapter in the saga was a news story in last Sunday's issue headed: "Good News for Lawyer, Hard News for TV". It reported, gleefully, that the *ST*'s solicitor, Alastair "Blubber" Brett, had been paid damages by the makers of Channel 4's *Hard News* programme. The programme, according to the *Sunset Times*, had "wrongly accused him [Brett] of trying to link Proetta with known criminals and offering them money". Brett, it added, had "financed his own legal action to clear his name".

Before the *ST* crows too loudly over its supposed victory, certain points should be recalled. When Proetta sued the *Sunday Times* for its smear campaign against her, the defence was masterminded by Alastair Brett. While preparing his case, he went to Maidstone prison to interview a convicted drug smuggler, Joseph Wilkins. The lag said that he would testify against Proetta only if Brett paid him £3,000. Brett pointed out that he couldn't give money to criminals. Fair enough, said Wilkins: give £3,000 to my sister. Amazingly, Brett agreed.

What would a jury have thought had it discovered that a member of a crook's family had been given a financial reward in exchange for the blackguarding of Proetta in the witness box? We shall never know: as soon as the newspaper's counsel, George Carman QC, learned of Brett's astonishing conduct, he insisted that the newspaper settle the case out of court to avoid being torn to shreds under cross-examination. The *ST* paid Proetta costs and damages of £150,000.

Brett may think that he has "cleared his name", but in view of the above facts it seems unlikely that all the perfumes of Araby could sweeten that moniker now.


CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
BBC TELEVISION CENTRE
"HELLO, DIMBLEBORE, HOW ARE YOU GETTING ON WITH QUESTION TIME?"
"I SAID I'D GIVE IT BACK TO THE AUDIENCE...
BUT THEY DIDN'T WANT IT"
"Trebles and performance related no pay all round!"
VIEWING FIGURES
Ken Pyne

WITH THE 25th anniversary of troops being deployed in Ulster due in August the paramilitaries are gearing up for the arrival of thousands of television personnel.

Thanks to its acquisition of the Visnews agency (which supplies equipment and crews to most of the international networks) the biggest direct beneficiary of the media invasion will be Reuters, but Belfast's bars, taxis and hotels — including the currently bomb damaged Europa, which hopes to re-open next month — are also hoping for a windfall profit.

An endless flow of documentaries on the conflict will clutter TV screens worldwide in the summer, with gunmen on both sides anxious to gain maximum exposure. The Republican Press Centre will, as usual, provide a seamless service from its deliberately dilapidated HQ on the Falls Road with the IRA's "reluctant" rejection (when it finally comes) of the Major-Reynolds peace chimera providing a useful focal point. Advance bookings, especially from America and Northern Europe, look promising.

Militant Protestants are determined to gain their share of coverage, too, with the Loyalist Information Service ready to point lenses in the right (or even far right) direction. Prospects for the Ulster Defence Association look particularly good, with its *nom de guerre*, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, sounding suitably macho in translation.

One surprise participant in Troubles TV will be the British Forces Broadcasting Service which has previously avoided any involvement in Northern Ireland, despite the presence there of a large part of its target audience. Showing greater foresight than many of its civilian competitors, BFBS concluded last year that the violence was likely to continue and decided to invest in a brand new studio complex in Belfast.

Quite whether morale among soldiers already fearful of redundancy and further cutbacks in equipment and training will be improved by being given more information about Northern Ireland is debatable.

AUTHOR John McVicar appeared on last week's *London Tonight* to talk about an interview he allegedly had with one of PC Keith Blakelock's real killers. The interview was part of a book which was never published because — McVicar claims — the police threatened to sue him.

What McVicar didn't say was that the account the alleged "killer" gave was clearly nonsense, as it is at odds with all the evidence about the murder. McVicar's interviewee claims that "it happened so quickly — a couple of minutes" and that after the killing "the kids did their war dance round him". All the evidence — accepted by all sides — proves that the murder was over in seconds, not minutes, leaving no time for a "war dance". Indeed, the "war dance" idea came from a statement later thrown out of court on direction of the trial judge who described it as pure "fantasy", which the police forced out of an innocent 13-year-old.

John McVicar will also be well aware that the police cannot sue a writer for questioning convictions. The only suits which might have come from the book would have been from the Broadwater Farm community. One woman was castigated as being extremely ugly and the confidence of another resident was broken, nearly resulting in his brother being arrested.

LUVVIES

"When you're acting it's an intensity of existence. It's a life that's moment to moment, shattering, existing, existentialising, extemporising, expropriating, taking, fighting, chewing up air, confessing, crying, shrieking, killing, loving, emoting. Then you come off stage, you've made love to 500 people at once.

STEVEN BERKOFF
Sunday Times Magazine

Submitted by Francis Harvey.

An occasional column devoted to the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

HACKWATCH
Sir John Junor

"WRITING a column may look easy," Sir John Junor observed in his autobiography, *Listening for a Midnight Tram*. "In fact if it is any good at all it is the hardest job in the world." This is because of the need to "say something original" every week.

Since moving to his present perch at the *Mail on Sunday*, Sir John has clearly decided to take things easy. He no longer attempts to say something original — or, indeed, to say anything at all. The technique of filling his copy with questions, first practised in his old *Sunday Express* column as a way of floating outrageous ideas without incurring libel writs, is now used merely as a substitute for thought. He will allude to one of the week's events, ask "What does it all mean?" and then admit that he hasn't a clue. For this, he is paid a salary not unadjacent to £100,000 a year. Seldom has ignorance been so well rewarded.

4 July 1993: It has been reported that Gus O'Donnell is planning to quit as John Major's press secretary and move back to the Treasury. Junor, a fan of O'Donnell, thinks this would be a disaster; so he is glad to see that Downing Street has said the report was untrue. "If it should ever turn out to be otherwise," he adds, "then that is the day I will sell my shares in John Major."

11 July: Junor is mystified by the existence of the Scott inquiry. "What possible good can the inquiry achieve?" He does not know. Perhaps it will prove that the Thatcher government turned a blind eye to arms sales to Iraq. "But so what?"

18 July: Junor's old friend Selina Scott has been photographed holidaying with 52-year-old Mr Ted Brocklebank. "Are they having an affair? May they even have been secret lovers for years? I do not know. Nor do I much care."

25 July: Lord Rees-Mogg's legal challenge to the Maastricht Treaty is being financed by Sir James Goldsmith. "I wonder why. Just what is he up to?" Junor does not know.

1 August: "After the Christchurch by-election, what does the future hold for John Major? Is he on his way out?... What does it all add up to?" For once Junor has an answer. "I could be wrong. I often am. But in my view it adds up to the fact that Mr Major is going to remain in his present job for a long time to come."

5 September: Back from his summer holidays, Junor has his phone cut off for a day by a cable fault. "It did not matter very much to me," he observes. "I make no great point about it."

12 September: Why is there such coolness between Lady Thatcher and John Major? "Might it, above all, and as I have long suspected, be because he has not offered her the foreign secretaryship?" Junor thinks such an appointment would be "quite impossible".

19 September: The Australian prime minister is meeting the Queen at Balmoral. "Will he get his way about making Australia a republic?" Junor muses. "I don't know." He turns to another question: "I wonder just how much Mr Norman Lamont was paid for writing these articles in the *Sun* and its sister newspaper *The Times* in which he stuck his little poisoned dagger into Mr Major's back." Again, alas, Junor does not know.

3 October: In contemplative mood, Junor writes: "As Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze fled last week from the Black Sea port of Sukumi... I wonder if he reflected on the quite staggering changes that have taken place in his life in the past five years." Junor does not know.

17 October: Bob Hope, who has been married for 59 years, is alleged to have had a string of extra-marital affairs. "Can it be true?" Junor does not know. Meanwhile, it has been confirmed that Gus O'Donnell is indeed leaving No.10 to return to the Treasury. Will Junor keep his promise to sell his shares in John Major forthwith? Far from it. Apparently forgetting what he wrote on 4 July, Junor now insists that O'Donnell's departure proves Major "is no longer in immediate danger".

24 October: After the Austen Donnellan trial, Junor is shocked to read that students at King's College, London, sometimes have one-night stands. "Can this be true?... Is what has been happening at King's College typical of what is happening at other universities throughout the country?" He does not know. Meanwhile, he ponders Lady Thatcher's future. "It is," he reminds us, "my continuing conviction that she wants to become foreign secretary." Only a month after dismissing the idea as "impossible", he is now rather keen on it. "Wouldn't the combination of Margaret Thatcher and John Major be an irresistible incentive for deserters to return to the Tory fold at the next election?"

21 November: Stephen Fry has claimed that two members of the Cabinet are gay. "Is he simply making a wild, unfounded allegation?" Junor does not know. But, he adds, "I very much hope so."

28 November: "I wonder what Lady Tryon's reaction was when she saw her picture on the front page of almost every popular newspaper in the land last week, accompanied by the desperately sad news that she had cancer." For once, Junor ventures an answer: "I would not imagine it was one of pleasure."

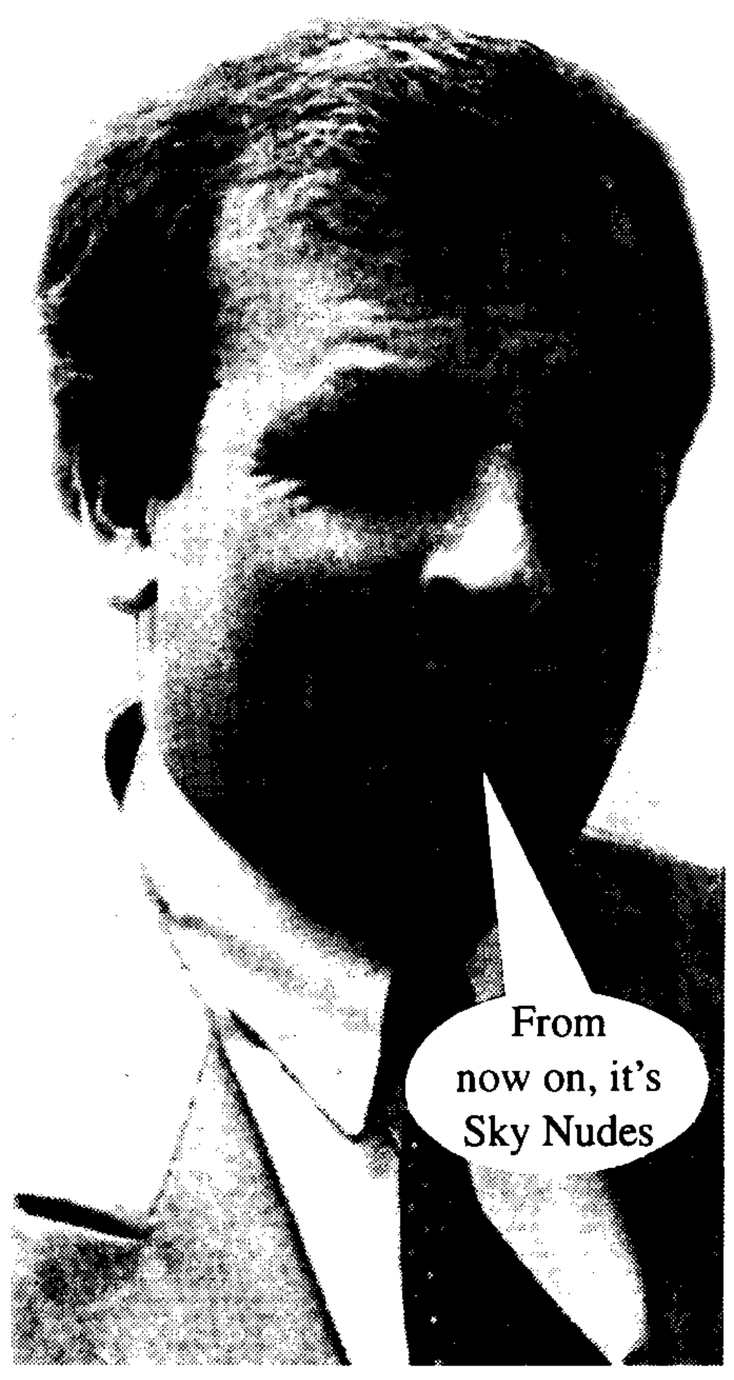
12 December: Winnie Mandela has been elected leader of the ANC's women's section. "Can her election mean anything other than the fact that she still holds the allegiance of a great many Africans, especially among the young?" He cannot say, and adds: "I don't pretend to know what the future holds." Meanwhile, he is appalled by the conduct of the Serious Fraud Office in doing a deal with Roger Levitt: "Just what is going on?... Is it just blinding inefficiency? Or is there something more sinister? I don't know."

2 January 1994: Junor is puzzled by the Tim Yeo affair: "What does it all add up to? I don't know."

9 January: "I wonder how 34-year-old solicitor Miss Julia Stent is feeling as she surveys the havoc which has been created by the birth of her illegitimate child." Junor does not know, but he wishes he did. "Would this not be a subject on which Miss Stent would wish to enlighten us?"

16 January. The Duchess of Kent has become a Roman Catholic. "Could other and even more senior members of the Royal Family follow the Duchess's example? Could it all end with the disestablishment and maybe the disintegration of the Church of England?" It comes as no surprise to learn that, once again, Junor simply does not know.

MACKENZIE'S NEW SCHEDULE



SALLY DEEDES

THE 6.33 London to Folkestone train on 1 December was, as always, packed to bursting, with many long-suffering commuters forced to prop themselves up in the aisles and corridors.

One beady-eyed victim — or "customer" as British Rail calls them — spotted a vacant seat in a first-class compartment and upgraded her travel card so she could sit in it.

When she opened the door to the compartment she had to ask one of the five men already seated to remove his bag from the sixth remaining seat. "It's his bag," the man responded petulantly, pointing to the traveller opposite. "Actually, this compartment is reserved," said the second man, refusing to remove his bag.

Is it possible to reserve an entire compartment and stop others who are willing to pay for first-class travel from claiming their seats? Apparently it is — if you are one of the five members of British Rail's board of directors, who were heading for a meeting in Ashford on the 6.33 on 1 December.

Let us hope the BR executives arrived at their destination in better condition then their travelling companions.

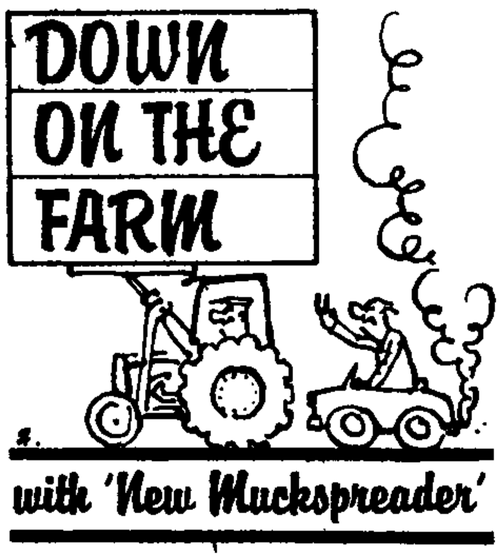
WHEN Robert Lehmann received his last bill from British Gas Southern, he did not realise that the government had already started to impose VAT on domestic heating bills.

Of course it had not, but when Mr Lehmann checked back through his bills he found that over the last four years quite a few had included VAT.

Complaining to customer accounts, a spokeswoman told him in the most nonchalant manner — suggesting to Mr Lehmann that she took such calls regularly — that she would check, send him a statement and, if necessary, a refund.

British Gas has since confirmed that Mr Lehmann needlessly paid £702.48 VAT — and has sent him a balance of £288.81 after deducting his latest bill.

● FOLLOWING my story in the last issue about the 600,000 grounded Hoover travellers, many readers have asked for the telephone number of the Hoover Holiday Pressure Group. It is 0442 219 725.



with 'New Muckspreader'

STEPHEN CARR, who farms subsidies on a 300-hectare beef, sheep and arable enterprise in east Sussex, claims this could be the year when the subsidy tail really starts to wag the farming dog.

If he is right — and EC and UK handouts increasingly shape the way farms are run — the ministry of agriculture (MAFF) and its EC cronies are the most important thing in agriculture today. It is thus vital they behave in a fair and honest manner.

Maff, however, is now being run like the Maffia (*sic*), and one of its more odious habits is its truth economy in dealing with questions from the likes of Sir Jerry Wiggin, erstwhile chairman of the agriculture select committee and MAFFia watchdog.

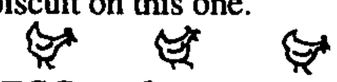
The Maffia was caught out late last year when it was accused in the Commons of blocking egg producers' attempts to find out what was infecting their hens with salmonella. The odious MAFF is now trying to grease its way round the accommodating Wiggin with its own version of the story.

At issue is the way flocks have been tested for salmonella infection. The veterinary SS, aka the ministry's State Veterinary Service (SVS), would slaughter 60 birds from each flock and send them to one of its own laboratories where men in flapping white coats would culture them to see if salmonella bugs would grow.

After a spate of transparently false results, producers became convinced that one or more of the SS labs were themselves contaminated. In desperation, after the MAFFia insisted on killing birds come what may, some producers refused to allow the stormtroopers to take their birds.

One brave soul, determined not to lose his flock to the men in white coats, had his son park a 42-tonne lorry blocking the gate. A message was sent to the then food minister, David Maclean, who, to his eternal credit, acted swiftly and decisively. Within hours talks were underway with *Gruppenführer* Victor Meldrum, the government's chief vet, and a day later a deal was stitched up allowing hens to be found infected by two separate labs before they were slaughtered.

The Maffia, determined not to admit its previous testing had been faulty, now tells Wiggin that the new procedure came about because "the ministry had been advised that flock owners would welcome the additional reassurance that infection was present..." In a world of increasingly Orwellian newspeak, the Maffia takes the biscuit on this one.



EGG producers are not the only group outraged by the Maffia: sheep farmers are now queuing behind fishermen and abattoir owners in taking the ministry to court.

At stake is the survival of the crazy sheep quota system which allows tenants to sell their sheep, and the production quotas that go with them, leaving the land on which they had grazed bare and valueless.

New sheep cannot be moved on to the deserted pastures as the quota which permits their rearing has long gone. And as well as landowners suing for compensation for loss of farm values, conservationists and others are crying foul. Marginal hill farms, suitable only for sheep grazing, are being left bare, while wealthy farmers concentrate lamb production in fertile lowland plains — the very practice the quota system was supposed to prevent.

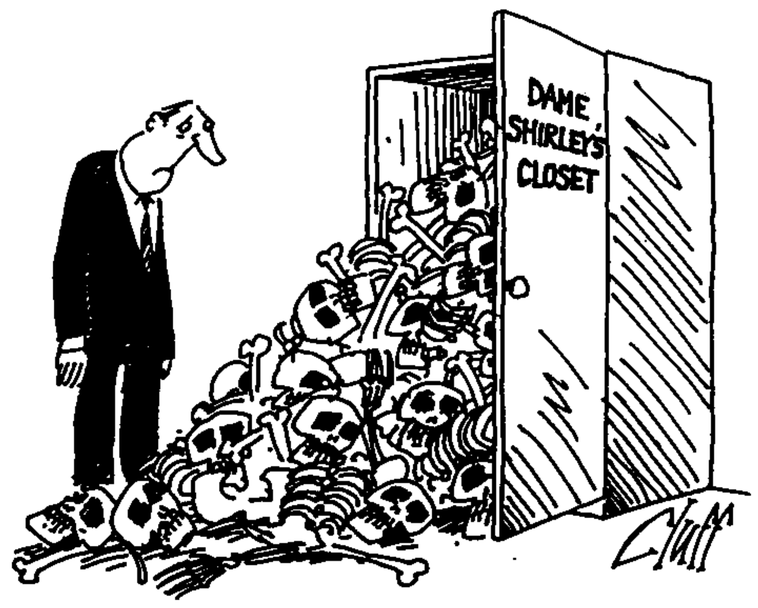
WHILE British farmers in the south and south-west battle to cope with flooded land and "enjoy" a temporary respite from the reign of terror instigated by the pollution police of the National Rivers Authority — a moratorium on prosecutions — their Dutch competitors (*sorry*, their Dutch European union *partners*) are doing much better.

The Dutch will receive handsome flood compensation from their government, while EC agriculture commissioner Rene Steichen stays silent on what amounts to an illegal subsidy. UK farmers are learning that when a level playing field floods it is no longer very level.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

I HOPE I CAN RELY ON YOU TWO!
ER....
GULP!
VOTE TORY
COME COME! AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE DONE FOR THIS COMMUNITY! I DO HOPE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET ME DOWN!
ER.. WELL, WE'D LIKE A LITTLE TIME TO DISCUSS IT MR SMYTH-WARTON
VOTE
WE'LL GO FOR A PINT! HELL BE WELL UNDER BY THEN!!
WITHERING BOG



ROTTEN BOROUGHS

WESTMINSTER

DODGY council house sales are not the only cause of concern in Tory-run Westminster.

Those who collect voting cards for opposition parties at local council elections have noted that even *before* the poll tax dissuaded people from registering to vote, inordinately large numbers of would-be electors turned up at Westminster's polling booths to find, to their huge surprise, that they were not registered.

Strangely, the disenfranchised tended to be those from housing estates in marginal wards where there was likely to be a large potential Labour vote.

Somehow Westminster had not got round to delivering the forms in time for the elections — and, unlike in other boroughs, no council workers had been round house to house to urge registration, nor had councillors checked why no voters' names had been recorded against the addresses.

What an unfortunate set of coincidences...

TOWER HAMLETS

WHILE the *meejah* descended on Tower Hamlets to cover the saga of the Liberal Democrats' election leaflets, the story of why ex-council treasurer Pradeep Chand was secretly loaned £150,000 from council funds, revealed in the *Eye* at the end of last year, was conveniently ignored.

Chand paid the money back after retiring from the authority on "health" grounds, but Labour councillors want to know how a supposedly hard-up local authority could part with so large a sum so covertly and with so few safeguards.

Strangely, the story barely warranted even a mention in the main local paper, the *East London Advertiser*. No doubt the *Advertiser* hacks were too busy scrutinising the recent deal between their owner, Glen Newspapers, and the council for £260,000 worth of advertising — and the announcement that Glen Newspapers is to publish the council's own in-house newspaper.

BIRMINGHAM

ANOTHER student has left Birmingham social services' university of crime — the notorious St John's children home — with a double first.

The boy, aged 16, was so awkward that the home's bungling staff decided on a sneaky way to get rid of him, even though he was so dangerous he had to be kept in the home's top security unit.

Instead of renewing a care order when it expired, they simply ejected him into a flat with a promise that a social worker would visit him every fortnight.

That was despite a record which included stealing dozens of cars, usually after absconding from children's homes. On one occasion he crashed into another car whose driver is now suing the department for negligence. On another he was sent on an outward bound course with his social worker, Dave Stuart, but stole Stuart's car leaving him stranded in the Welsh mountains.

So anxious was St John's to be rid of the boy that it assured his worried parents that he was now cured and safe to live on his own. Within days he was arrested by police after allegedly trying to hold up a garage with a shotgun — and is now back in the "care" of St John's.

BIRMINGHAM (Cont.)

THE reign of Noshaba Hussain at Birmingham's Springfield school (see *Eyes passim*) may finally have come to an end after a panel of governors voted unanimously to sack her.

The governors met in private to discuss secret reports about how they wasted more than £10,000 appointing a head teacher who had no paid school teaching experience.

As the *Eye* has recorded, the appointment panel comprised Mohammed Yussouf — Hussain's colleague in the Muslim "parliament", and his nephew, Aziz Ul-Hassan, who belonged to Mrs Hussain's Sparkbrook constituency Conservative party. The *Eye* has copies of the reports, which show Hussain's appointment was accepted because education officials failed to check her qualifications.

The checks now reveal amazing discrepancies, including:

- An English degree Hussain says she obtained at McGill University in Canada. McGill says it has no record of her at all — under either her married or maiden names.
- A claimed distinction when she took a diploma in education at Nottingham university in 1977. Nottingham says she got an ordinary pass.
- A law degree obtained from Nottingham in 1971. Mrs Hussain's application form suggests she obtained a 2:1. The university says she got a third.

The belated checks also reveal major discrepancies in Hussain's claimed employment record, including:

- A claim that she worked for the department ror education as a principal officer — a very senior position. In fact she worked in a junior capacity for the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, a DfE-funded voluntary group.
- A claim that she was employed by the Commission for Racial Equality from August 1984 to April 1986. In fact she actually worked for them until February 1989 but took the last 14 months off sick.

While she was "sick", the city council's own records show how she was employed for 30 days by women's unit head Mrs Nancy Johnson of Harambee fame (*Eyes passim*) to run events at the Women's Festival. Her Springfield application form shows she was subsequently employed as managing director of the Muslim women's training centre while still off "sick".

The training centre subsequently collapsed with huge debts. A city audit report said her management was "totally inadequate", with £31,930 being put to unauthorised use.

In spite of all this Hussain still protests her innocence and has written to fellow Conservative party member, education secretary John Patten, asking him to suspend the governors instead. Strangely, he has not responded.

HACKNEY

GONE are the days when Labour-controlled Hackney would boast of its status as Britain's poorest borough. Council leaders are now only too happy to be photographed collecting fat cheques from government ministers.

One for £300 million was recently handed over so Hackney could demolish 20-year-old tower blocks and improve other council estates. But like a dizzy pools winner, it seems the money is going to Hackney's head.

Despite having no tourists, only one museum and many of Britain's most dangerous streets, the borough has appointed... a tourism officer, Maureen Taylor.

At £55,000 a year she is getting about twice the going rate for the job. Why the generosity? Ms Taylor keeps the salary she enjoyed as Hackney's outgoing director of leisure. Shame her leisure directorate had to be axed.

MURKEYSIDE

THE MOST deprived area in Britain — the Murkeyside borough of Knowsley — is poised to receive an attractive new amenity: a 125-acre hole to be dug in green belt land and filled with 125,000 tonnes of rubbish a day for the next 15 to 20 years.

If the plan at New Cut House Farm goes ahead, it will mark a curious ending to the even more curious saga of planning decisions at the site.

The farmer who once owned the land could not make it pay, and so sought permission from the council to set up a shooting range and motocross field there. He was turned down on the grounds that the land was in the green belt, the roads were inadequate and there was no parking space. The farmer promptly went bankrupt.

Amazingly the new owners, D.W. Ltd, have not had the same difficulties — even though they expect more than 60 lorries a day to pour crap down a big hole in a conservation area. Jonathan Clark, current head of Knowsley's planning department, has "no strong views either way" on D.W. Ltd's application, and his agnosticism extends only to considering objections concerning the use of the land. Wider issues — like increased lead pollution in an area with record levels of respiratory illness, or the effect on the water table — matter not a jot.

Nor has the suitability of D.W. Ltd to handle the project been considered. So far it has not registered any accounts, and it isn't in the telephone book. It does have a registered office — PO Box 5, 122 Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby — which happens to be the address of local solicitor Kevin Alphonsus Dooley.

The man who admitted publicly that he gave

"Helen, sweetheart, bring me the report on sexism"

his friend and client Sir Kenneth Oxford (former chief constable for Merseyside) a £20,000 interest-free loan, is the legal representative of D.W. Ltd. By coincidence, Dooley also acted as solicitor for the poor old farmer who once owned the land!

While environmentalists hope Knowsley council will not let the application through on the nod, locals are already well used to living near filth. The local industrial estate houses the News International plant — set to become the main UK centre for printing the Murdoch newspapers — and the department of the environment ignored locals' fears when it gave Waste Management Ltd permission to build an incinerator to dispose of hospital waste.

THE cost of dying is set to rise once more in Falkirk District.

The cost of an adult cremation is to rise to £101 without the organ, and £118 with.

Falkirk Advertiser

"God knows what they teach them on those Government Retraining Schemes"

MANCHESTER

LESS THAN six months before Manchester hosts the supposed follow-up to the Rio Earth summit — Global Forum '94 — council leaders are trying desperately to salvage the much-hyped extravaganza.

At Global Forum, world leaders were supposed to debate green issues alongside a carnival of eco-friendly events and festivals. But the department of the environment, alarmed at Manchester's lack of preparation, split the two events.

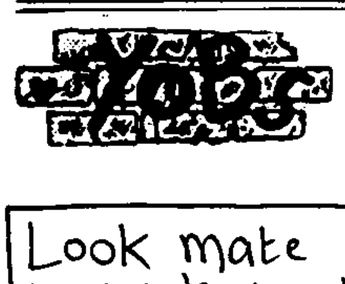
The heavy debates were heard at a scaled down "Partnerships for Change" conference last September, graced by an alarming lack of world leaders, while the eco-carnival side, Global Forum, is now in doubt thanks to the kind of organisational cock-ups that made Sheffield's world student games such a blinding success (*Eyes passim*).

Chief executive Dave Spooner was ousted last summer, followed in October by event manager Chris Church and six other staff, including popular local ecology spokeswoman Dr Cathy Brooks, a move which convinced Friends of the Earth to withhold support.

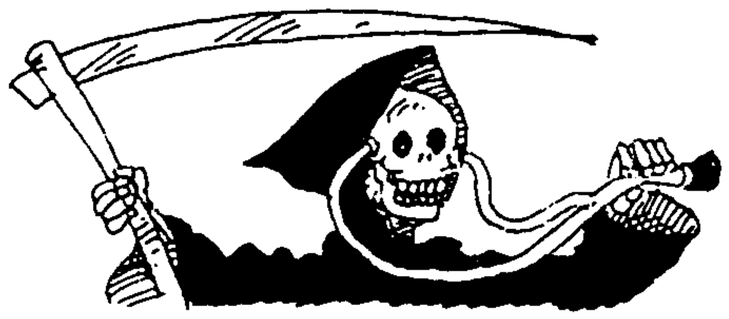
Global Forum is being bankrolled by £1.85 million of Euro money with any losses to be underwritten by the city council. But although organisers expect to raise more than £1 million in sponsorship from local businesses — they are also counting on 20,000 participants paying £60 each and claim around 200,000 visitors will cough up a fiver each — sponsorship so far is of Sheffield-like proportions: there isn't any.

Registrations are at one-tenth of expectations and gate money predictions are being tempered by memories of Rio, where more than 15,000 people a day got in free. Rio's Global Forum ran out of money on the first day and was bailed out by the Dutch and British governments. This time John Major has failed to pledge public money. Rio also had the incentive of sun and sand, while Manchester boasts, er, the *Coronation Street* set at Granada studios. Even worse, Manchester's event clashes with the world cup.

One vociferous supporter, however, is the council-owned Manchester Airport company. Like the council it has promised to underwrite the event for £250,000. This is the same airport that in the last 50 years has been "protecting" the environment by concreting over huge swathes of it in south Manchester.



HUSBAND



DOING THE ROUNDS

SOUTH Birmingham health authority has put a stay of execution of the Royal Orthopaedic hospital (see *Eyes passim*) after managers realised it is making a £750,000 annual profit and that plans to transfer its 134 patients to 84 beds at Selly Oak hospital which are already full of emergency patients are unworkable.

SBHA, which faces a £13.5 million deficit and 800 job cuts, has, however, managed to award a dozen managers a £1,500 performance related bonus on top of their annual pay rise. Managers at the ROH, the only hospital in the South Birmingham acute unit to be making a profit, were not included.

The handouts coincide with a report from the district auditor putting a final figure on money wasted by **West Midlands RHA** on a redundant HISS computer system: just £27 million. The auditor criticises the RHA for never having taken a boardroom decision to enter into the project, inadequate documentation of key decisions and unsatisfactory contracting. Bonuses all round.

In a separate report, the auditor has laid into the accident and emergency services in the West Midlands region. The auditor found that a quarter of the emergency beds in the region were occupied by the chronic sick and elderly, who weren't able to be discharged because community care is lacking.

Dudley Road hospital has had a 40 percent increase in emergency work since the closure of the accident hospital, with the result that many patients are bedded down in the corridor. A 90-year-old woman recently spent eight hours on a trolley at **Good Hope hospital** and a 64-year-old stroke victim had 21 hours' worth of trolley at **Heartlands hospital**.

The WMRHA's recent discussion document *Looking Forward* proposed a further 40 percent cut in emergency beds over the next five years. This prompted 124 consultants to write to Virginia Bottomley condemning the "skeleton service" (*sic*) and warning that "sick people in South Birmingham will have to look to neighbouring districts for treatment or buy into the private sector."

● BERNARD CHARNLEY, a consultant pathologist at the **Prince Charles hospital, Merthyr Tydfil,** has billed the hospital £78,000 for hundreds of tests carried out on private patients he was led to believe belonged to the NHS. Auditors Ernst & Young cleared the hospital of conspiring to defraud the NHS in a £40,000 report earlier this year. However, critics claim that key issues weren't examined sufficiently and Ernst & Young has been asked to reinvestigate. Expect another £40,000 report soon.

"It's another Tory love-child..."

● **LONDON'S Royal Free hospital** has accepted an offer of £750,000 from a consortium of fundholding GPs in **Enfield** to treat their orthopaedic patients. The offer stipulates that all such patients must be seen in outpatients within two weeks and operated on no more than four weeks later. Orthopaedic patients of non-fundholding GPs living in the Royal Free's catchment area of **Hampstead** and **Chalk Farm** will now be shunted to the back of the queue.

● **SHROPSHIRE FHSA** has warned GPs in the area they could face a "penalty" if eligible practices do not opt to become fundholders. West Midlands RHA has set a target of 90 percent of such practices to become fundholding by 1996/7. Across the country, the 145 GP practices who dropped out of the fundholding scheme between 1991 and 1993 after landing in debt have cost the taxpayer £2.5 million. As **Reading** fundholder Dr Rod Smith put it: "It is not a total waste of money because the health service still gains through the management experience and computers that the doctors gain in that year." NHS management costs have risen 18-fold since 1987, from £25.7 million to £494 million.

● **CAMDEN and Islington health authority** has reversed its decision to switch £20 million worth of contracts away from **University College** and **Middlesex hospitals** after 200 GPs took out newspaper advertisements pointing out that any such switch would force the hospitals out of business. And the £1 million indebted **Greenwich healthcare trust** has asked GP fundholders to switch contracts to bail it out. The trust ran into problems after an upsurge in emergency admissions compounded a £786,000 underspend by local fundholders.

● **SURREY'S Frimley Park hospital** is set to demote 18 G grade nursing posts to F grades without consultation, and thus renege on national Whitley Council pay agreements. As chief executive Andrew Morris said: "We are not prepared to negotiate with national union negotiators at this time." Elsewhere, 36 G grade district nurses due to work for the new **North Birmingham community trust** have been told to compete for 18 posts. The losers face demotion and a £2,500 cut in salary.

● IN **STAFFORDSHIRE,** most non urgent surgery has been postponed due to bed shortages. Mid Staffordshire hospital has closed three wards and in North Staffordshire, 84 non-emergency beds are being occupied by emergencies. **Cannock hospital**, which faces an overspend, has cancelled all routine admissions and closed the respite care ward.

● AT **EAST SURREY hospital,** closed wards are being refurbished to reopen as private and luxury NHS accommodation for patients prepared to pay that bit extra. The 16 "Quality Suites" will all have rooftop terraces and en-suite bathrooms. The trust has sent out tariff cards to 2,000 local households and businesses offering the suites for £300 a year per family of four and £6,200 per business of 50. There will be a £75 surcharge for each day spent on the suite. As chief executive Stephen Dowsett says: "I don't think we should deny anyone the opportunity to take this up."

● A SURVEY by the Junior Doctors Committee has revealed that 4,000 juniors are still working more than the 83-hour limit stipulated in Mrs Bottomley's new deal, despite the department of health's claim that only 91 such posts exist. The survey also found that 30 percent of juniors do private work for their consultants and only half of them are paid for it. This figure looks set to rise at the **Freeman hospital trust in Newcastle,** where new contracts are being offered to consultants which lift the 10 percent limit on their private earnings.

● FOUR inner-city GP practices who recently placed adverts in the *British Medical Journal* for new partners to replace those who had taken early retirement due to stress received, er, no applicants at all.

M.D.

MUSIC NEWS

THE LPO is discovering the true cost of its residency contract at the South Bank under the centre's dirigiste director, Nicholas Snowman.

In Snowman's submission to Sir Leonard Hoffman last autumn he wrote that until 1993 "the London Philharmonic's stated artistic ambitions were limited to playing the core orchestrated repertoire from the past." So successful had this policy been that the orchestra's audiences were once the envy of musical London. But that was before the abominable Snowman forced changes.

First he insisted the orchestra copy the LSO's co-principal system. Then he decided on the classic double whammy: the resident orchestra should plan more "difficult" programmes (ie concerts that would be less likely to sell) and then repeat them.

Now the situation is different: the LPO almost lost its entire grant last month and ended up on par with its arch-rivals, the Philharmonia. But while the Philharmonia is more or less in the same position as it was pre-Hoffman, the LPO is forced to make painful cuts in its fees to players.

First casualty, and in a clear breach of the residency contract, is Snowman's cherished co-principal system. Then the players are being asked to forego 10 percent of all fees; and in future, musicians will have to wait to be paid for recording sessions until the orchestra has itself received full payment. In practice, this will often entail months of delay.

The South Bank centre, however, custodians of the residency grant, shows no sign of letting up on its insistence on the "new" artistic approach. The orchestra, therefore, looks set to see audiences dwindle and to receive further complaints from loyal subscribers about the musical fare.

PAUL FINDLAY recently moved from being the general manager of the Royal Opera to take up a post as managing director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

While he was employed at Covent Garden, the Royal Opera's tour and travel arrangements were handled by a small company named Blair Travel and Leisure. Now, at the Royal Philharmonic, some of the travel requirements are also being booked through Blair Travel.

A quick look at the shareholders' register reveals that a certain P.H.D. Findlay owns 1,600 shares in Blair Travel and Leisure. Could he be any chance be related?

Findlay confirmed to the *Eye* last week that it was indeed he. He added, however, that he had disclosed his shareholding to both the Royal Opera and the Royal Philharmonic. So that's all right, then.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

I'd die for Di. Princessdom isn't a birthright, it's a gift, and Diana's got it. Her smile lights up this unpleasant land.

VANESSA FELTZ
She Magazine

IF CHARLES wanted a lesson in how to win friends and influence people he should have witnessed Sir Denis Thatcher's performance at the Glengoyne 'Oldie of the Year' lunch at Simpson's on Thursday.

Not only did Sir Denis turn up to accept the 'Prince Consort award'. He insisted on making a speech to the delight of the assembled company.

RICHARD INGRAMS
Observer

Submitted by Francis Harvey, E. Strobes.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

UN NEWS

BY THE middle of this month the United Nations had counted no fewer than 1,190 illegal overflights in the so-called "no fly zone" imposed by the security council.

By contrast, for four days from 15-19 January, the UN made no flights at all into Sarajevo, thus threatening food, water and medical supplies to civilians and UN troops there. For once the Serbs were not to blame: this was one of the last acts of UN under secretary-general Melissa Wells, who has now been fired.

Wells had refused to allow the existing contractor, a Canadian company, to continue flying, regardless of the protests of the UN chiefs on the ground. The unfortunate Ms Wells believed the words of the American mission, which persuaded her that an American company, Evergreen Helicopters, was being corruptly done out of UN contracts by a Canadian company. She suspended eight UN staff for their alleged part in this and refused to allow the Canadian company to carry on flying.

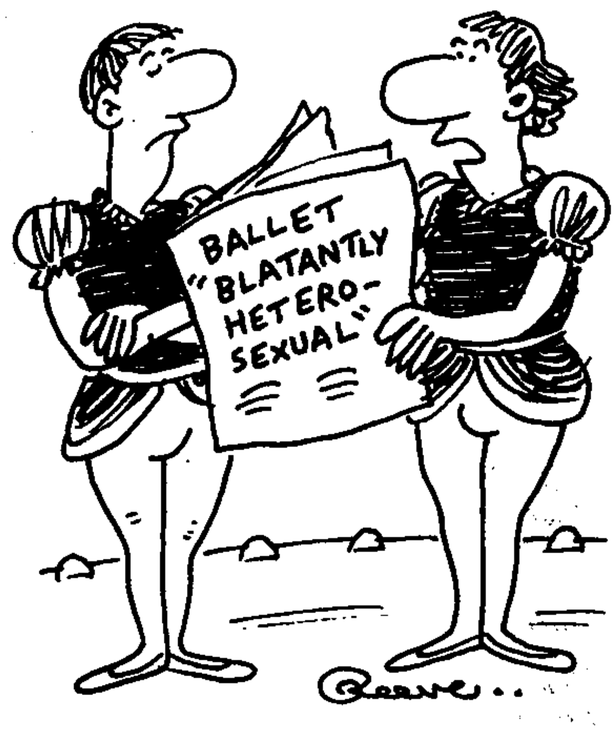
After six months, there has been *no* tangible evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the eight, nor by the Canadian company. But Ms Wells would not back down. The Canadian government, which pays its UN dues upfront, unlike the Americans who often take two years, is seething with anger at the cavalier way it has been treated by the UN.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the secretary-general, has now gone through no fewer than two American "reforming" under secretary-generals in two years. The first was Dick Thornberg, foisted on him by Bush and whom Boo Boo fired as soon as Clinton won the election. The second was Melissa Wells, foisted on him by Clinton.

While Boo Boo may not look after the UN's friends, he certainly cossets his personal pals. Last year he appointed Ismat Kittani as his special representative in Somalia to replace the fired Sahnoun, widely suspected of having his own mind. It proved too much for Kittani's health, and he was relieved and given the sinecure of special representative to Tajikstan. Even that is now too much, and this year Boo Boo has made Kittani a special adviser at the highest rank available in the UN.

Kittani was Saddam Hussein's ambassador for many years, and unlike most of Iraq's friends in Whitehall, has never broken with him. His excellency still gets a pension from Saddam, but this is paid in Iraqi dinars into a Baghdad bank account: not much good for a Manhattan lifestyle! He also needs a visa to carry on living in New York... and the UN money helps as well.

However, top marks to Boo Boo for resisting French president Francois Mitterrand's pressure to appoint Jacques Attali to a UN sinecure. Even though Attali was the man who did so much for interior design at the European Bank's London headquarters (at a cost of £60 million), he will not be doing the same at the UN.



"I'll sue!"

Letters

Scott's missed

Sir,

How dare PRIVATE EYE *anoint me with the "Order of Whitewash" for chairing the Iraqi supergun report and then omit all the splendid members of parliament who unanimously supported it with their votes in the select committee.*

Lest their names be forgotten I commend them to you for your next honours list.

Doug Hoyle MP: Charismatic chairman of the parliamentary Labour party.

Rt Hon. John Gilbert MP: Stylish, "much-obliged", ex-Labour minister of state for defence.

Jim Cousins MP: The bouncing bearded interrogator.

Stan Crowther MP: Searing scourge of Customs & Excise.

Menzies Campbell QC MP: Ever suave Liberal Democrat defence spokesman.

...and four clean-living Conservative chaps: Cran, Grant, Hampson and Porter.

May Lord Justice Scott's report be as unanimous as ours.

Yours sincerely,
SIR KENNETH WARREN,

Kent.

Jolly silly

Sir,

Gosh, this is the first time I've written to thank the EYE. *Thank you,* EYE, *for the jolly good story about the Royal Armouries (Museum News, 837). It simply* MADE *my return from Christmas.*

It really was jolly, jolly good, but now I wonder if you could actually do something to help me run the Royal Armouries. I should be awfully grateful if you could. It's quite simple really. I'd like you to name some names.

First, could you possibly give me the name and address of the wealthy businessman who has pledged £40 million to our new museum in Leeds. I know it isn't Father Christmas — I tried him last year. But it would be nice to know who it is. Then I could write to him and thank him.

Second, could you please give me the names of the curators I am going to dispose of. Or, if you'd rather not, could you at least let me know how many I am disposing of. Then I'll know how many sacking letters to write. Actually, until you mentioned it I really was (I'm sorry if this sounds too silly) thinking of taking on some extra curators instead. But I quite agree with you that disposing of some of them is more sensible and much, much cheaper. I hope you don't mind if I tell them I got the idea from you.

Of course, if you'd rather not name names or number numbers I shall quite understand. After all it was a jolly good story (actually all of it was just as good as the bits I've mentioned), and we don't want to spoil it do we?

Happy new year.

Yours faithfully,
GM WILSON,

Master of the Armouries, London EC3

Counsel for the abused

Sir,

Among the letters you published in your Christmas issue was rather an unChristmassy one from Mr Mitchell of the Isle of Islay. It was headed "Tol-story". Mr Mitchell was rather selective in his reference to what I have said. The words quoted by Mr Mitchell taken from about four pages of the transcript on the same subject were used by me at a moment of high exasperation and sought to describe what I thought Tolstoy's counsel was getting at. I most certainly did not think that I had told "a lie".

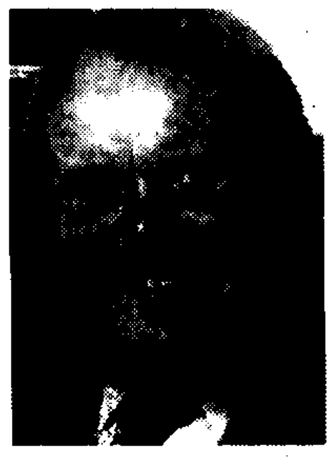
What is Mr Mitchell's purpose in quoting little bits of the evidence the jury heard over nearly nine weeks, when that jury, having heard it all, awarded me £1.5 million damages?

Yours faithfully
LORD ALDINGTON,

Ashford.

Lookalike

Redhead



Socrates

Sir,

I wonder if your readers have by any chance noticed the remarkable resemblance between Socrates, Ancient Greek dialectical philosopher, and the late Brian Redhead, famous radio news presenter. Are they by any chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
MOIRA WHITTLE,

London E2.

Coal man

Sir,

I was astonished to read your misleading and inaccurate attack on Doug Bulmer, president of the British Association of Colliery Management (BACM). You blame him for the collapse of the intended merger of BACM with the Engineering Managers Association (EMA). This is not true.

The merger has failed for a variety of reasons which are being fought in the high court. BACM has been misled and abused by several people but not by Doug Bulmer.

You assert that Doug Bulmer is being provided with time by his employer to fulfil his duties as a trades union president. This is not true. Employers often provide such time. John White, EMA president, is employed by an electricity company but is working full-time for the EMA, for example.

Your assertion that BACM provides Doug Bulmer with a car is especially offensive. Prior to Bulmer becoming BACM president it was normal practice for BACM to provide its president with a car. The first action of BACM following Bulmer's election as president (within minutes of the declaration of the election result) was to withdraw that perk.

You imply that Bulmer's appointment as a director of British Coal Enterprises (BCE) results from his "friends in high places in British Coal." This is not true. BCE exists to train redundant mineworkers and to find them alternative employment. Bulmer began his working life as a pitman looking after pit ponies underground. By diligence and study he progressed to become a face-worker, then a deputy, then an undermanager, then a pit manager, then an area director. He was elected BACM president which indicates that he is the most respected colliery manager in the UK. Throughout his entire working life he has been an active, elected trade unionist representing his fellow workers. All of us employed in the UK coal industry are threatened by imminent redundancy. We need BCE to be as effective as possible. I can think of few if any persons better suited to be directors of BCE than Doug Bulmer.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD S. COURTNEY,

B.A.C.M.

Out of stock answers

Sir,

Museum News (837) hasn't got it quite right on the South Ken complex.

I didn't know the V&A mail order operation had gone down the tubes, but it fits with the state of the shop pre-Christmas. Far too small, overcrowded and out of stock of just about all the more interesting things in the catalogue. If that's "all-important" someone has lost their sense of priorities.

Cross the road to the Science Museum and you'll find a first class bookshop plus a large general shop stocked with everything from cheap educational toys to elegant (but damnably expensive) repros. for big boys. I've never met Cossons but comparing the V&A displays with the interactive learning area for kids and the stunning new aviation gallery in the Science Museum, I don't think his K is inexplicable.

Also MusNews hasn't really thought out admission prices. The BM encourages donations, and the V&A follows the general New York practice of suggesting what the donations should be, which seems sensible. If you're sufficiently brazen, you can just walk past. Personally I prefer the direct approach of the people on the other side on Exhibition Road: an adult ticket for the year costs £9.50 for the Science Museum or twelve quid for the Science, Natural History and Geological Museums and has to be one of the few bargains still on offer in this overpriced town.

Compliments,
SANDY SKINNER,

London W11.

Truth of Tring

Sir,

In an article under the heading Pop Eye on page 6 of the latest issue of PRIVATE EYE, *you referred to me as having been chairman of Tring International. In view of the recent press coverage about Tring, your confusion is understandable but, purely for the record, I would just like to draw your attention to the fact that at no time have I been either a director or chairman of Tring.*

Yours faithfully,
ALAN WHEATLEY,

London EC4.

Lookalike

Atherton

Evans

Sir,

Have any readers noticed the uncanny resemblance between the new, fine upstanding England cricket captain Michael Atherton, and that new, fine stand-up captain of comedy, Lee Evans?

I feel sure that DNA testing would prove, without any shadow of a doubt, that both were fathered by Mr Norman Wisdom.

I think we should be told.

Yours,
D. LEECH,

Cheshire.

Eastern promise

Sir,

Re: In the City, Harrington Kilbride PLC. I write in my capacity as company secretary of Harrington Kilbride PLC, one of the companies featured in your In the City section in your current edition.

As your commentator suggests, we have no doubt that we are able to satisfy the authorities in respect of our Eastern European employees.

The onus rests on employees to comply with immigration legislation and not the employer. However, we have strict procedures which are followed when employing Eastern European nationals. We insist on seeing evidence of the individuals' entitlement to work in the UK and copies are retained on the employee's files.

The problem of illegal immigrants is normally to be found in the cash paid/self employed end of the market. We do not pay staff cash and on the rare occasions when we do treat our staff as self-employed, we only do so on provision of evidence that the Inland Revenue accepts that status.

Yours sincerely,
K.D. AUSTIN,

Finance Director, Harrington Kilbride Publishing Group, London N1.

New woman and Baddiel

Good Sirs,

Undoubtedly, the great Newman and Bloody'ell debate has now bitten the dust. I so enjoyed reading all the letters and articles — from men.

So, why not do something for women? I realise that most of you have done quite a lot for women already, and that some of you didn't always get caught. However, would it not up your female readership to pander to us for a moment?

You might consider printing a nice centre page picture of Mr Newman, clad in just the leather trousers, and with the decorously dangling on the extremely hirsute chest, Jim Morrison type wooden beads. This Mr Newman is very funny, and his cognitive processes are so delightfully complex, I can't think about that without getting terribly excited. Please do not include Mr Bloody'ell as he is an obnoxious little twat.

Yours fondly,
MS J. BURCHILL (no relation).

Care lines

Sir,

I read the letter headed CHILD PROOF *and was moved to tears, and indeed to immediately write to you.*

I have often wondered how so many people who must have a social conscience to start with in order to become social workers, end up behaving in what is reported as such an uncaring and apparently unjust way.

The correspondent, very movingly painted an alternative picture to that painted by ALL *the press, and I would like to send my sympathy to them, and thanks to you for printing, and a plea to all your readers to endeavour to keep an open mind — after all there are two sides to every story.*

Yours sincerely,
CAROLINE BROWN,

Bristol.

Sir,

Re: Orkney Child Care.

Last week's correspondent (837) commenting on the Orkney child abuse case may care to be acquainted with certain facts.

1. None of the eight W children seized in November 1990, nor of the nine "dawn raids" children taken in February 1991, was given any correspondence whatsoever. The kindly social workers blandly assumed, in advance, that the correspondence surely contained "trigger" words that would affect the children, and duly carried out no test to establish unusual reactions to cards and letters sent, and all the children were thus denied the simple comfort of elementary contact with home.

2. Whilst child abusers may indeed "bombard" their children in care with letters and gifts containing hidden "messages", it is nevertheless also the natural and healthy reaction of wholly INNOCENT *parents and friends to write and send gifts to their wrongfully seized children. It is* NOT *a sign of guilt.*

3. Some of the elder abused W children might well have been grateful for psychological counselling after their father was jailed for abuse in 1987, but Orkney social work department gave them none. Instead, their idea of "help" for this family was to sidestep legal process (twice), abuse the power of place-of-safety orders vested in them by parliament, and drag the YOUNGEST *children 100 miles to the mainland for "assessment". When these children became seriously disturbed as a result of their treatment in care, and became desperate to go home, they were given, instead, psychological "help". Five remain in care to this day.*

4. Since the father was jailed, no evidence of any further abuse has been presented, and there have been no charges, trials, or convictions.

5. Unimpeachable written testimony has been presented to MPs and the Scottish office, of gross interference and malpractice in children's hearings dealing with the W children, yet Scottish office letters both to this action group and to concerned MPs are noticeable only for the smugness and blandness of their replies. The Scottish office accepts with indifference the proposition of the two youngest children being adopted, despite the children's desperate pleas — when last seen by their mother — that they wished to return home.

6. Your correspondent may care to reflect that innocent parents who have their children seized have every right to turn to newspaper editors for support. For without publicity, the South Ronaldsay Nine children would still be in care, and likewise, as a direct result of such help, the W children may yet still be released.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW FENTON,

Secretary: Orkney Seven Action Group, Sussex.

Greenwich Observa-Tory

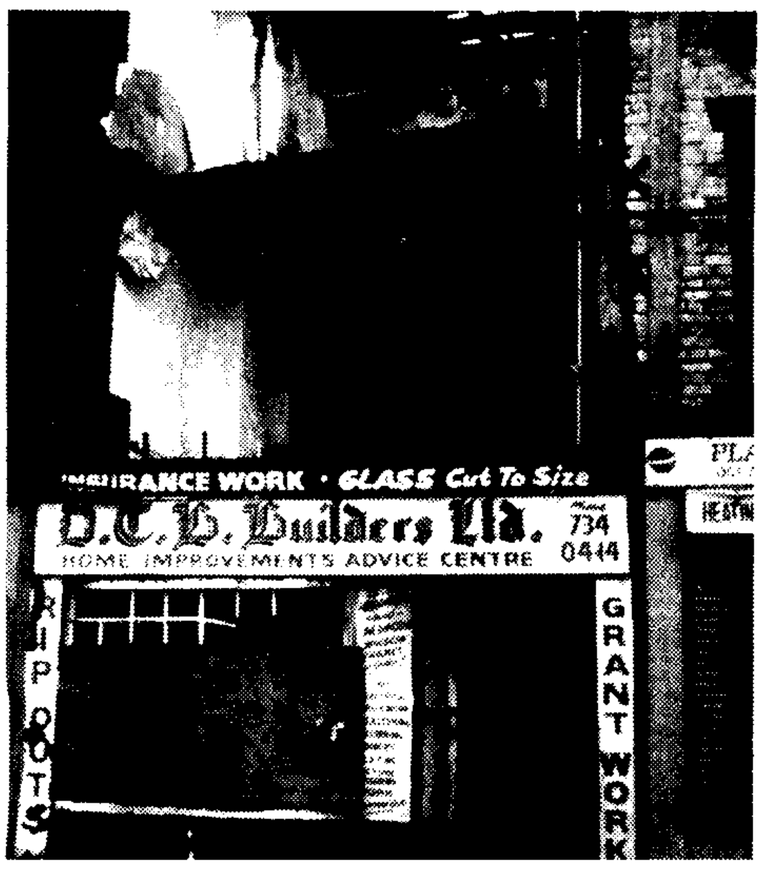
Sir,

Re: Susan Hassell's letter "Capitol Crime" (837). I bought a copy of the ex-Leaderene's rantings on 8 November from a secondhand bookstall in Greenwich. It cost me £15. Is this a record?

Yours,
MICHAEL BARRON,

London NW8.

I-SPY *Wavertree, Liverpool*



Submitted by Shelley Denton. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Calling cad

Sir,

Re: Nick Ferrari & Associated Newspapers
They called me — I didn't call them.

Yours,
NICK FERRARI,

Daily Mirror, Holborn.

Basic instinct

Sir,

One of your recent correspondents complains that references to "Ugandan discussions", etc, have lost much of their force as the original episode is now too remote for many EYE *readers — and advocates replacing the expression(s) with a "Camilla" substitute.*

I believe that "back to basics" is a superior euphemism, eg "I bet they're getting back to basics in the car park right now". One can envisage the car, a Porsche — or ministerial Austin Princess — with a rear-window sticker boasting "My Other Values Are Family Ones".

Kind regards,
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY,

Kent.

Wood treated

Sir,

What about setting up a fund for Peggy Wood who appears to have been so unjustly treated by her legal representatives (837)? Each time I read of her case, I feel tremendously incensed at her predicament. I pledge £100 to help if you start a fund or advise me where to send my donation.

Yours sincerely,
MRS E.M. WILKINSON,

Glasgow.

Cornwalled

Sir,

The claim that the WESTERN MORNING NEWS *had not carried a single story about planning anomalies in north Cornwall (Rotten Boroughs) is untrue.*

CREAM TEAS AND CONCRETE *on Channel 4 was a fine programme, but it followed many stories in the local press about planning complaints. A spokesman said at the time: "The programme is not investigative in the sense it does not reveal a lot of new information but it does bring together information already known about the council's more contentious decisions."*

Yours faithfully,
COLIN DAVISON,

Editor, Western Morning News, Plymouth.

Back. Out.

Sir,

Bring back GROVEL, keep out Keith Flett.

Sincerely,
MIKE WHITAKER,

Somerset.

Penis envy

Sir,

I really enjoyed the Heath cartoon (837) but surely John Major is the biggest dickhead of the lot?

Yours faithfully,
C.A. LEE,

West Sussex.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

GLR reporter: *What should you do if your children want to talk about solvent abuse?*
Health Minister Brian Mawhinney: *Take a deep breath...*
GLR News
(Ray O'Connell)

"What's the plural of 'ignited'?"
GABY ROSLIN, Channel 4
(Paula Grilo)

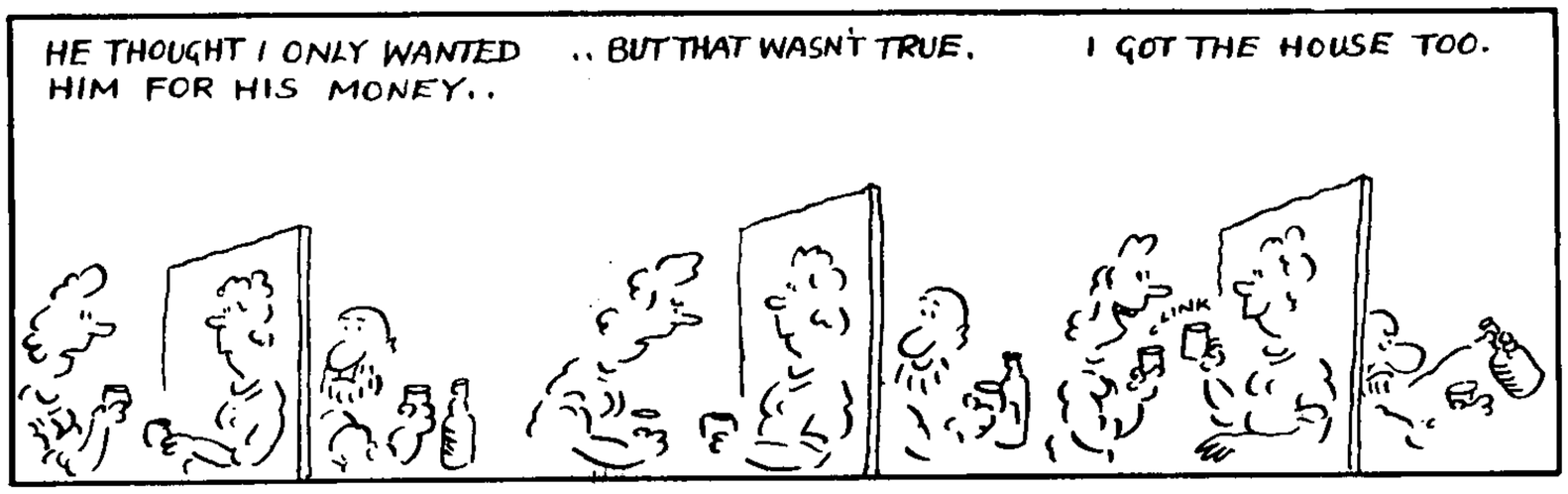
"They can land darts on the nucleus of a proton."
COMMENTATOR, World Darts, BBC2
(Nick Tyrrell)

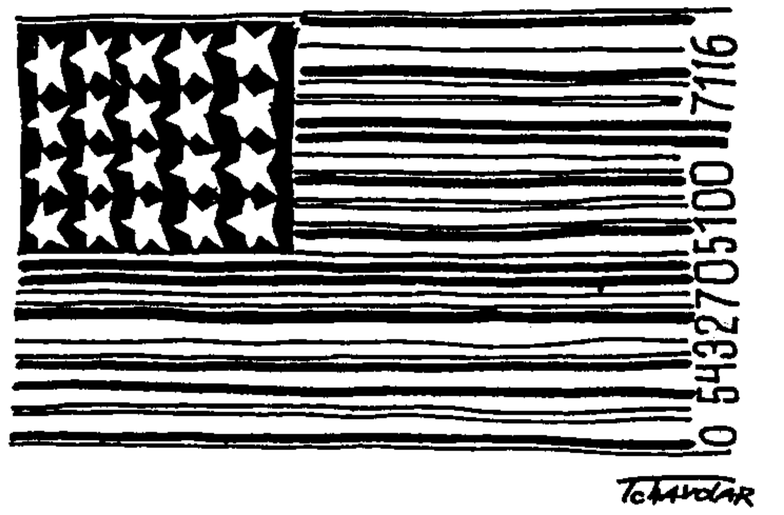
"He [Chelsea goalkeeper] does not speak too much English but, once he gets hold of the language, he will be the best goalkeeper in the country."
Radio 4
(M.H. Garrett-Cox)

Caller: *We actually have a 46-year-old world champion.*
Simon Fanshawe: *And how old is he?*
Caller: *He's 46.*
Radio 5
(Peter Jackson)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN





Letter from **Baghdad**

from Our Own Correspondent

THE International Food and Agricultural Organisation visited us last week and left saying "pre-famine conditions" existed in Iraq, which by the year's end could see famine on a Biblical scale.

Matchstick children with swollen bellies are expiring in every village in the country, only more quietly than their quarter of a million fathers who were minced by cluster bombs or shot "like fish in a barrel" while fleeing Stormin' Norman's forces on the Kuwait-Basra expressway. Of course, you will say it's all Saddam's fault.

But on the streets here that tune is about as popular as *Hava Nagila* at a Hezbollah wedding. It took genius to construct a western policy which bombed us back to the stone-age, partitioned the country into a Kurdish north, Iranian soaked Shia south and an iron-garrisoned Saddamist centre; starved us to death in large numbers three years after we left Kuwait and left the Baath party stronger than they were before you started. Congratulations.

When London was in flames, no cockney blamed Churchill for the Blitz. And here, Bush-Clinton and Thatcher-Major are considered the authors of our tragedy.

We are raising now a generation of what the World Health Organisation called "stunted Iraqi children" thriving only in their hatred of the West, their grievances mutating in ever more virulent form.

And the mullahs, once marginal in the only country in the Middle East to embrace secularism, are flexing new-found muscles. The Iraqi flag now bears a Koranic inscription and Saddam himself has had to be "born-again" to find new reserves of strength in this religiously radicalising region. Thus the West has run a new Baath — even more foul-smelling than the one we had before. Seeing Saddam with his bottom in the air is a nauseating sight to many good Muslims. But in the Middle East, his bottom raised in supplication is a more potent sight than his face used to be.

Incidentally, the most popular name of new-born sons in a survey recently of six Arab countries was Saddam. Third most popular was that of Udai — Saddam's wayward son.

And what of our Kurds?

Remember them? Those colourful mountain people in their brightly coloured costumes and those nice shoes with the big curly toes. The ones you gave millions to that nice Lord Archer to come and rescue. One of your ministers was talking about them just the other day.

Douglas Hurd it was. He made a special visit to Turkey (where 11 million Kurds live) to guarantee that "Britain will never support the establishment of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq." Sighs of relief, too, from your plucky "allies" Syria and Iran, who have another six million Kurds between them.

Douglas shook the hand of Johnny Turk, leaving him in no doubt that his participation in the Eurovision song contest was secure, no matter what happens to Lord Archer's children, hounded even into their — what was it John Major called them? — ah, safe havens, that's right.

A kilo of meat here costs half a month's salary of a graduate professional. One egg a day each for a family of four consumes the pay of a gynaecologist performing Caesarean sections without anaesthetic.

The babies in this cradle of civilisation are dying for a break. Is there any chance, do you think, of looking at us again, or will you continue to kill us with your kindness? After all, we never voted for Saddam Hussein. None of us here ever did.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

o "The government must crack down on this disgusting craze of 'Pumping'," a spokesman for the Nakhon Ratchasima hospital told reporters. "If this perversion catches on, it will destroy the cream of Thailand's manhood."

He was speaking after the remains of 13 year-old Charnchai Puanmuangpak had been brought into the hospital's emergency department. "Most Pumpers use a standard bicycle pump, he explained, "sticking the nozzle up their rectum and giving themselves a rush of air. Not only is that a sin against God, but it can be dangerous even for onlookers. Charnchai took it further still. He started using a two-cylinder foot pump, but even that wasn't exciting enough for him, and he boasted to friends that he was going to try the compressed air hose at a nearby gasoline station. They dared him to do it so, under cover of darkness, he sneaked in. Not realising how powerful the machine was, he inserted the tube into his body, and placed a 1 baht coin in the slot. Of course, he died instantly, but passers by are still in shock. One woman though she was watching a twilight firework display and started clapping. We still haven't located all of him.

"Pumping is the devil's pastime, and we must all say no to Satan," he concluded. "Inflate your tyres by all means, but then hide your bicycle pump where it cannot tempt you." *(The Japan Times, 15/8/93. Spotter — Tony Ford)*

— o —

o "You don't think of a Morphy Richards hairdrier as a dangerous weapon," said a spokesman for the Ilkeston police, "but the way Howard Tyler used it, it could have caused serious injury."

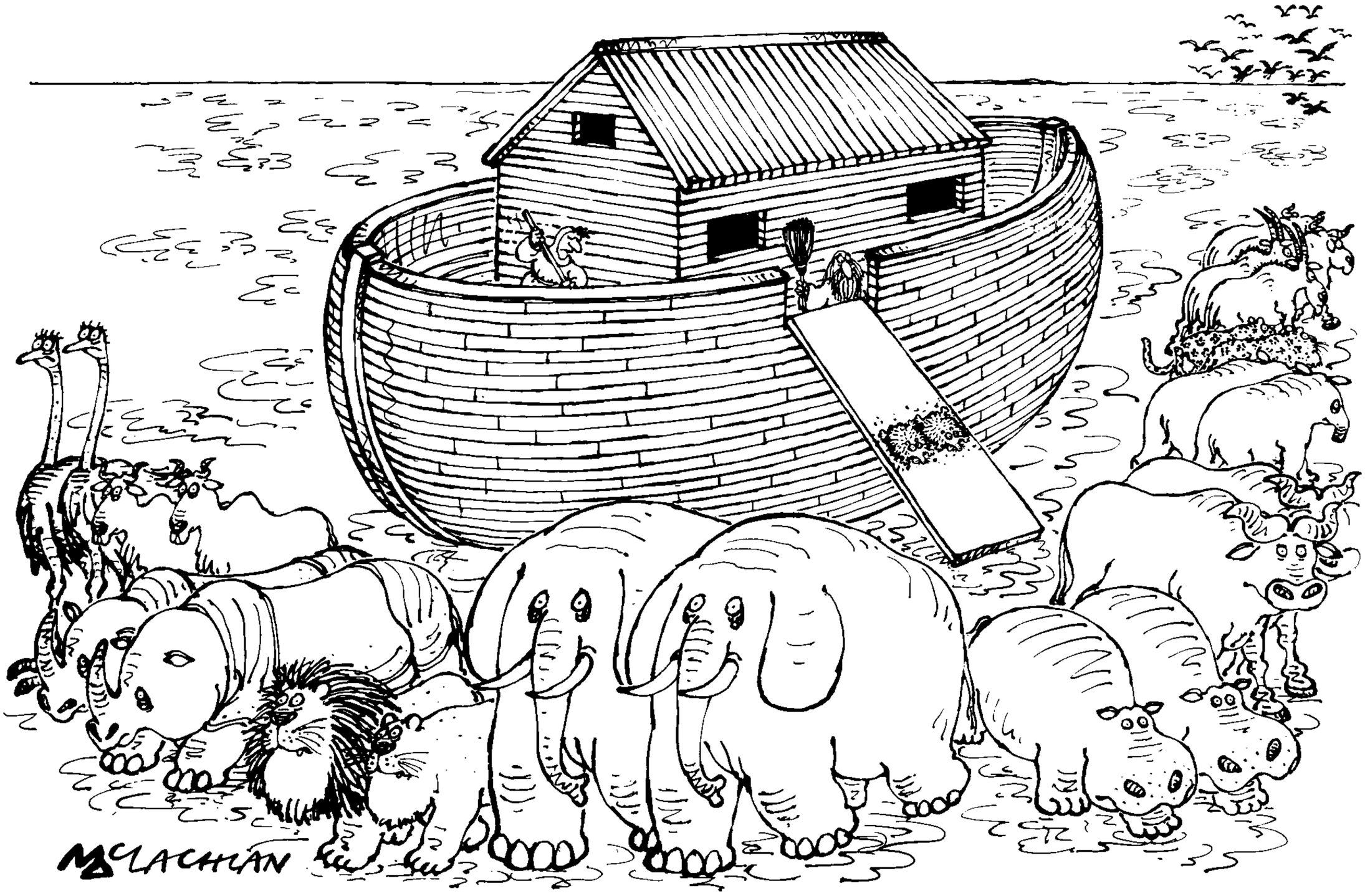
31 year-old Tyler, unemployed, had earlier received his sixth official warning for impersonating a traffic policeman. "He was angry with motorists driving at eighty past his house," the spokesman explained, "so he started dressing up in a dark suit and peaked cap, and stood on the pavement with his wife's hair dryer, pointing it at approaching cars. Drivers naturally thought it was a radar gun and slammed on their brakes. We had skid marks a hundred yards long up the road." Speaking outside his house, Tyler condemned police conduct. "If a man isn't free to use his own domestic appliances in the open air, then I call it fascism. Anyway, I'm doing their job for them, they ought to pay me. Including time and a half for weekends." *(Derby Evening Telegraph, 6/12/93. Spotter — David Wright)*

— o —

o *"You may think that multiple ejaculation is a splendid thing," Dr Sylvia Kaaya warned her audience, "but listen well to the tale of Alpha Mussika, and then think again."*

Dr Kaaya who was addressing a conference in Dar es Salaam on The Effect of Khat on Abusers, continued: "Mussika was a long-distance lorry driver and, like many of our countrymen, he was addicted to Khat leaves, chewing them during every waking hour. He first came to my surgery last year wearing rubber incontinence pants and complaining that he had been ejaculating more than forty times a day for the past month. When I said I didn't believe him, he proved that it was true. I eventually diagnosed spermatorrhoea, due to hormone disruption caused by toxins in the khat.

"But, if you are envying Mussika his condition, then be warned, because a week later he suffered total erection failure. He has not chewed khat for nine months now, but is still impotent. Although I cannot prove this scientifically, my belief is that he used up his lifetime's supply of orgasms in that one month. My advice to you all is to chew betel nut and not khat. And certainly no chewing gum. Children put it under chairs." (The Daily News, 18/12/93. Spotter — R. Blackie)



GERMANY

Do you want to succeed in Germany? We offer a completely updated list of 8,000 computer professionals you can rent or buy. We can also act as your agent or subsidiary in Frankfurt — and organise events for you.

PROFESSIONAL INFOTECH

MEAT BACON AND POULTRY
ASDA Fresh Turkey
ASDA Frozen Large Children 3lb 10oz - 3lb 14oz

ASDA Best Buys

Detective Inspector Peter Kirkbride said 1½ kilos of cannabis resin had been seized in a joint operation between Penrith and Carlisle police.

Cumberland & Westmorland Herald

YES, IT'S BACK — 'AB FAT'

The Top Comedy With That Awful Woman In It!

by Our Media Staff
Joanna Coles Lumley

ALL OVER Britain people are rejoicing at the return of the loud-mouthed self-publicist Edwina, the star of the long-running comedy *Absolutely Fatuous*.

The antics of the outspoken harpy have long delighted the nation's viewers and in this series she is set to have us clutching our sides all over again in sheer, unadulterated embarrassment.

In one episode she tries to write a novel — with hilarious results! And in another outrageous plot-line she tries to lower the age of consent for homosexual sex!

And they are just as funny as the old series where Eggina started a salmonella scare and had to resign!?!

Don't miss her! She's Absolutely Ghastly! *(Shurely 'Fatuous'? Ed)*

Other TV Highlights

The Birt Awards (BBC)

Who will win the coveted Single Most Stupid Idea award?

Will it be old-timer Producer Choice?!

Or newcomer Performance Related Pay with Quality Assessment Tests?

Either way, expect to see Johnny Birt on the podium.

COURTROOM SHOCK

"Gerry Adams didn't say anything today, but his gestures are performed by a mime artist"

GALLOWAY RETURNS FROM HELL

'I was quoted out of context'

by Our Man in the Underworld **Dante Farson**

MAVERICK Labour MP George Haveitaway *(shurely 'Galloway'? Ed)* returned from the Inferno last night and ran into a storm over his remarks praising the Devil.

Facing a mob of reporters, he claimed that his comments had been taken out of context and he had only been referring to "the damned" and their heroic efforts to cope with a very difficult situation in Hades.

Sataan Hussein

But a filmed account of the meeting on Hell TV (prop. R. Murdoch) showed MP Goaway *(shurely 'Galloway'? Ed)* warmly embracing the red-suited Supreme Commander of the Underworld and greeting him with the words: "I salute you, O Mighty One, Arch-Rebel and Master of Evil Doings. Keep up the good work."

The Devil sat smiling during the MP's heart-felt speech surrounded by top aides, including Major-General Beelzebub, Colonel Moloch, Air Vice Marshall Baal and many other senior imps.

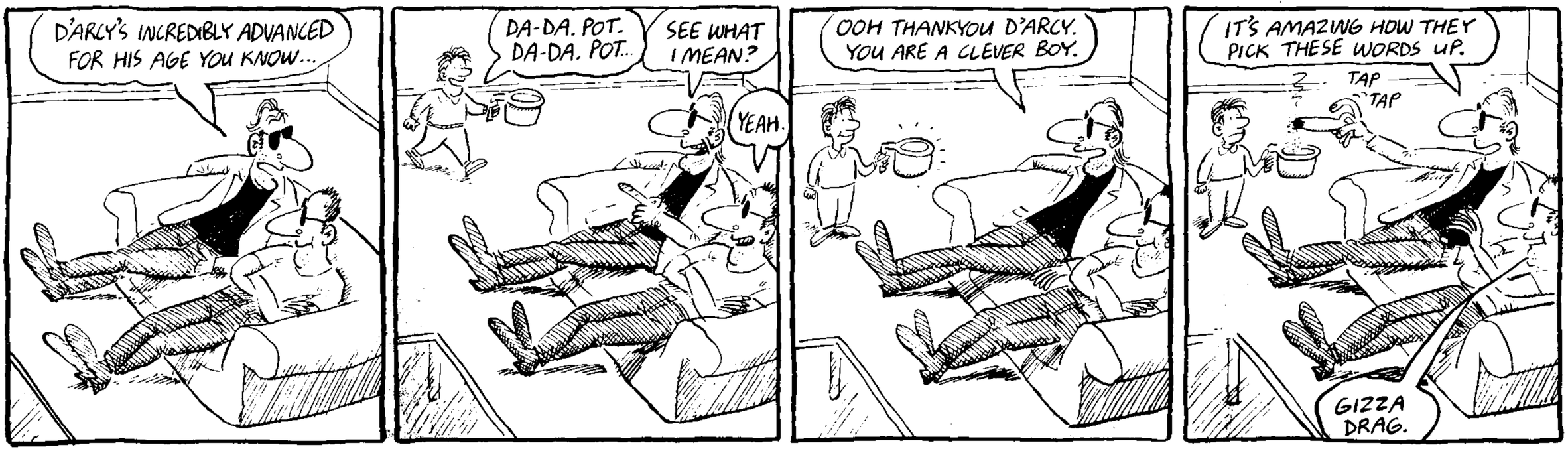
Call Old Nick Ross

Labour leaders were up in arms, but were so angry they decided to do nothing at all.

George Galloway is 39.

Celeb

LIGGER


D'ARCY'S INCREDIBLY ADVANCED FOR HIS AGE YOU KNOW...
DA-DA. POT. DA-DA. POT...
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
YEAH.
OOH THANKYOU D'ARCY. YOU ARE A CLEVER BOY.
IT'S AMAZING HOW THEY PICK THESE WORDS UP.
TAP
TAP
GIZZA DRAG.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

At last I have managed to draw a line under the so-called "sleaze factor" which is preventing my Government from its proper job — i.e. getting back to basics. I was therefore not inconsiderably annoyed this morning to see the tabloid press — i.e. the Daily Telegraph — had "raked up" six more Conservative MPs who have got love children. There was at least one good piece of news — i.e. a Mr. Ashby MP who has been setting a first-class example of saving money by sharing bedrooms when he is on holiday abroad with his friend. I am sure now we have heard the last of all this.

Tuesday

The newspapers do not seem to have got the message about the line I have drawn under the sleaze... Not that there is any sleaze, it is all just allegations — like this morning when the papers said that Mrs Lady Porter

had sold lots of council houses to Tory MPs in order to buy their votes. But fortunately all this happened in the days of Lady Thatcher, which means that it is all her fault and not mine — just like the so-called Iraqi Super-Glue Affair which I have got Mr Scott to look into. When will the newspapers get the point that everything that has gone wrong with this country is the fault of Mrs Thatcher. "Including making you prime minister," my wife Norman added, totally missing the point as she often does when it comes to politics.

Wednesday

Today Mr Scott has asked me to give evidence to his enquiry. What cheek! Surely it is obvious that if I knew anything about what had happened, I wouldn't have asked him to find out for me. However he soon realised his mistake, when he started asking me questions, and I was able to reply: "I did not know what was going on, and even if I did, I can't remember." Everyone's mouths fell open with amazement at my brilliant replies, and soon Mr Scott said I could go home, as I "obviously didn't have a clue" what I was doing. He is a very shrewd man, and I was obviously right to give him the job.

Thursday

Tonight we had a special dinner to say goodbye to Mr O'Donnell, and to thank him for all he has done to put across my policies to the press and to win their support. Naturally some of the papers were not asked to the dinner because of their traditional hostility to the Conservative Party — i.e. the Sun, the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph. We had a very nice dinner and I am glad to say that I made a very witty speech, which consisted of reading bits out of this diary. Everyone laughed, which was odd, since the extracts were very serious. But it showed that everyone was in very good spirits, thanks to the excellent wine which we found in Norma Lamont's cellar after his unfortunate decision to spend more time with N.M. Rothschild and Son. My memory of the later part of the evening is very hazy, because I was feeling rather tired. But I remember making a very funny joke to Mr Brunson about Mr Portfolio and Mr Howard. He was so impressed that he wrote it down in his notebook.

Friday

The newspapers, which I pay no attention to, have somehow got my joke about Mr Portfolio all over the front pages. "Did you say this?" asked Norman, as we were eating our M&S Chocolate-Chip "Champs Elysee Brioches" for breakfast. "I cannot be expected to remember every joke I make," I replied sternly. "I am a very busy man. Hundreds of jokes pass my lips every day. It is unreasonable to imagine that I have perfect recall of all of them. Anyone would think you were Mrs. Baxendale." "Oh," said Norman, "who is she? Some other woman that you're not having an affair with?" I decided to draw a line under breakfast, and took my brioche down to my office to get on with my work.

Saturday

Mr Smith has in no small measure annoyed me. Today in the House of Commons he asked me why I had put up taxes more than anyone else in history. Luckily I had a brilliant impromptu reply typed out by Miss Hogg. "If the Labour Party were in power, which they are not, they would put up taxes by much more." This silenced Mr Smith, who immediately went on to ask the question again. I repeated my answer and everyone groaned, obviously because Mr Smith had not got my point. I then found in my ring-binder another note typed by Miss Hogg, saying: "If you are desperate, accuse the Labour Party of making up smears against you and read out this list:

"1. Tories Sell Honours. Not true.

"2. The Guardian, i.e. a Labour Party paper, said that the Saudis had given money to Michael Heseltine. Not true.

"3. They said we were closing down hospitals. Not true, as Mrs Bottomley has made clear on many occasions.

"4. They said I was no good. Not true.

"P.S. If you are really in trouble, remind them about all the great Labour disasters — e.g. the lavender list 1976, the groundnuts scheme 1949, the Zinoviev letter 1924 and Mr Dalton's budget leak 1946."

When I read this out there were jeers and shouts of "pathetic", "utterly dismal" and "grotesque" — which shows how unpopular the Labour Party is.

Monday

Mr Howard, although he is in my 'Bastards' book, has got some very good ideas about making the police more efficient. In future, local Conservatives will be in charge of all police authorities to make sure there is no bias.

And moreover the courts will now be assessed on a performance related basis, i.e. the more people who are sent to prison, the more money the judges will be paid. These are in no small measure excellent proposals and no one could possibly object to them.

Tuesday

Mr Howard's plans are in ruins. They have been attacked by everyone, including Lord Whitelaw and the Lord Chief Justice. I was always suspicious of them and intended to tell Mr Howard so at the time. It just goes to show that once you have been put in my 'Bastards' book you are likely to remain there. Oh yes.

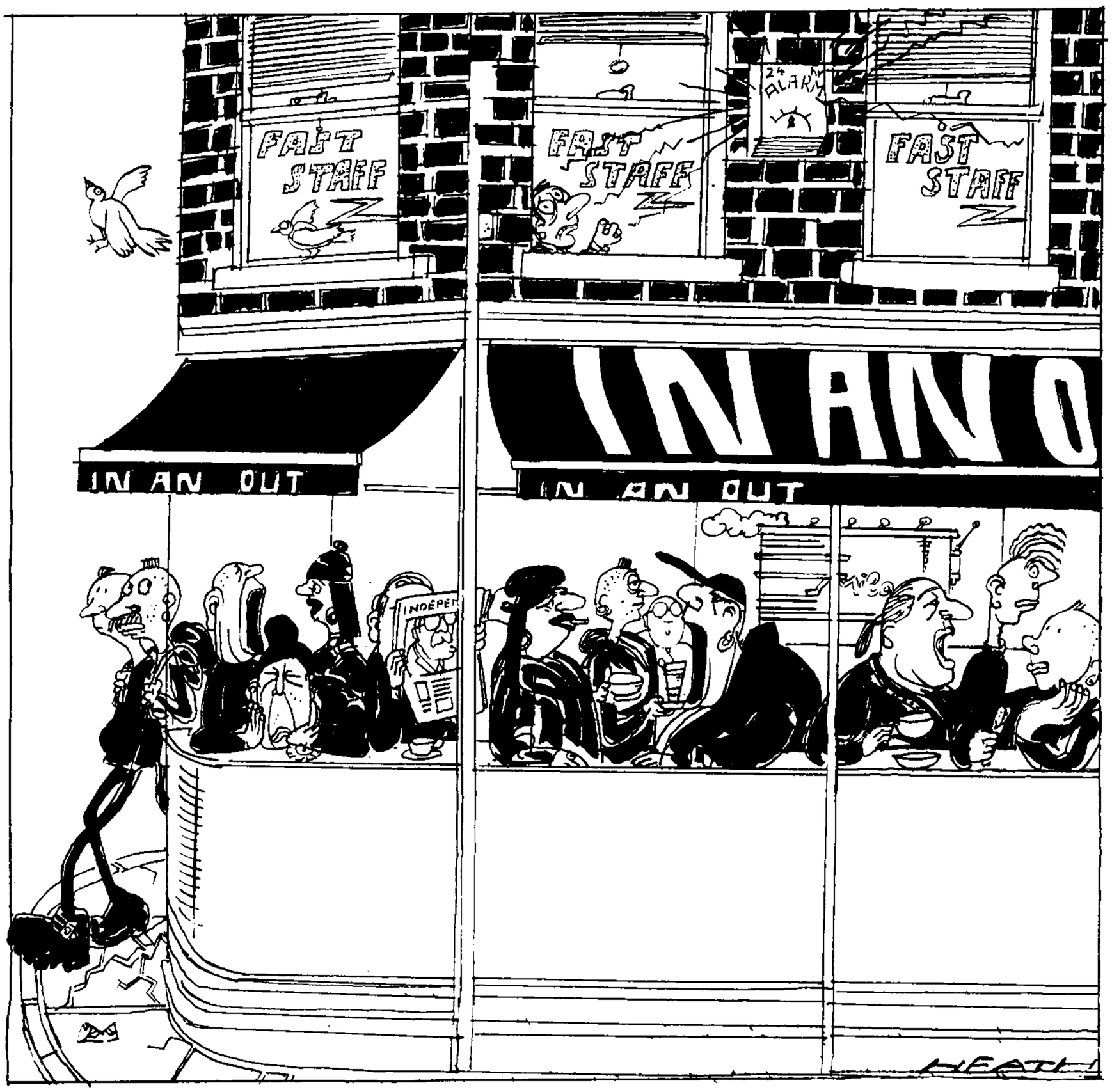
Wednesday

Someone has been claiming to have thought up my Back to Basics idea. "It is a silly old woman who writes books," I told my wife Norman. "I thought you weren't going to mention Mrs Thatcher again." she said as she defrosted the freezer and took out all the individual portions of M&S Vegetarian Steak 'n' Kidney Pie and piled them on the table.

"Not her," I said in a cross voice. "But somebody called Dame Barbara Cartland."

Norman looked surprised. "She writes rubbish," she said, "so perhaps she did think it up."

"I hope you can refreeze those pies without risk of food poisoning," I said, skilfully changing the subject.



Great Bores Of Today.

"... I think it's disgusting that she got off scot free after all she *did* do it and she's not even saying she *didn't* do it which makes the law look ridiculous mind you he was asking for it the way he treated her and everything but all the same that is out of order I mean it's mutilation of a very high degree... ouch... even though they did find it when she'd thrown it out of the car and sewed it back on just think about that do you reckon it was the whole thing? it can't have been could it? otherwise he'd have bled to death do you think it still works? it can't be the same though can it? poor bastard he's only 24 what if it came off when he was you know doing it with someone else? it doesn't bear thinking about whatever he'd done he didn't deserve that he was asleep you know and he woke up and it had gone... nightmare... imagine the stitches no I think the press coverage has been very tacky do you want another cappuccino? ... "

A GIFT TO LAST A LIFETIME
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AT

SQUIRRELS KINDERGARTEN NEW ROAD

Lambourne End

For children from 2½-5 years of age. Children will be learnt through play and organised activities.

Advert. West Essex Gazette

Poetry Corner

LATE NEWS

In Memoriam Brian Redhead, Telly Savalas, Jean-Louis Barrault

So. Farewell
Then.

Radio broadcaster, TV
Detective and
French mime artist.

"Can
I come
To you first,
Minister?"

"Who loves ya,
Baby?"

Those were two
Of your
Catchphrases.

It is
Difficult to
Convey

Monsieur Barrault's

In a
Poem.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber

Wrongly named

MY name was printed incorrectly below my letter in the December 30 issue of the Sevenoaks Chronicle. It should read L P Pook, not L P Hook.

L P Hook
Woodside Road
Sevenoaks

Sevenoaks Chronicle

President flies in to stricken 'quake city

by Our Los Angeles Staff
Monica Freeway

PRESIDENT Clinton last night flew into Los Angeles airport and told waiting newsmen: "Let me assure you, this is not just a flying visit. I am not doing this just to get on prime-time TV. This is not just a gimmick to win some quick popularity. I am here to make a long-term ongoing commitment to this great city in its hour of need. God bless America."

The President then played a few bars on his tenor saxophone, before flying back to Washington to tell more lies about something else.

That No. 10 Gus O'Donnell Leaving Dinner Menu in full

Right Bait
or
Leak Soup
— * —
Stuffed Gus with Hot Potatoes and Spilt Beans
— * —
Roasted Right Wing of Fuck with Crucified Lettuce
— * —
Porky Pies with Brunson Pickle
— * —
Toadies-in-a-Hole
— * —
Just Desserts, including Pile of Crêpe
— * —

To Drink:
Trevor Kavanagh Sauvignon 1994
— * —
Greig's XXXX Lager
— * —
Non-Vintage Portillo
— * —
Redwood Mountain Coffee
and
Ashby's After-Dinner Mints

COUNSELLING THROUGH THE AGES No. 64

"You must learn to love yourself, Narcissus"

WHY PAY MORE FOR YOUR HOUSE WHEN YOU CAN VOTE CONSERVATIVE?

AMAZING TESCO SALE

4-Bedroom Council Houses
were ~~£250,000~~ now £150

7-Bedroom luxury Georgian Home in SW1
was ~~£3 million~~ now £37.50

Entire block in Smith Square (suitable headquarters for political party)
was ~~£29 million~~ now £12.50

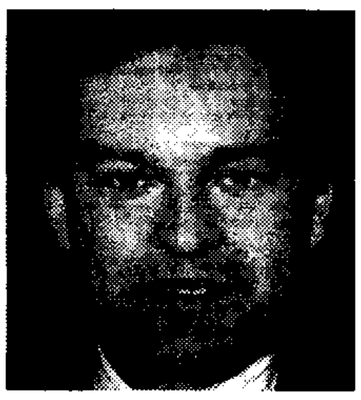
PLUS

This week's supersaver
Cemeteries

were ~~£5 million~~
now ONLY 5p EACH

Satisfied customers include

Mr Andrew D. MP: "It's unbelievable — I've literally doubled my money (and lost my job)."



Mrs Teresa G. MP: "It's unbelievable — I've saved literally thousands of pounds — and now I'm suing the Sun as well."

The Conservative Party: "It's unbelievable — we snapped up our Central Office for only 12p, then we were able to sell it for £25 billion (and we lost the election)."

Remember
Good Votes Cost Less with TESCO

TURDS TO BE REUNITED

by Our Popular Music Staff **Philip Borman**
(author of *Help! I Never Knew The Turds*)

THE POPULAR singing group the Turds are to live again, it was revealed last night at a ceremony for rock and roll immortals to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Spiggy Topes, the former lead singer of the legendary Turds, had flown in from his 20,000 acre Sussex farm on the Isle of Dull to accept the accolade, and had surprised many of the Los Angeles audience by still being alive.

Back in the USA charts

"I am delighted to pick up this posthumous honour," Mr Topes explained and confirmed rumours that he and the other surviving Turds had indeed agreed to re-form in the near future.

"This is an idea," said Topes "that has been waiting to happen ever since the Turds broke up in 1969 owing to the fact that we hated each other and that I ran off with all the money not to mention Tommy's bird and Algernon's 12-string Gibson."

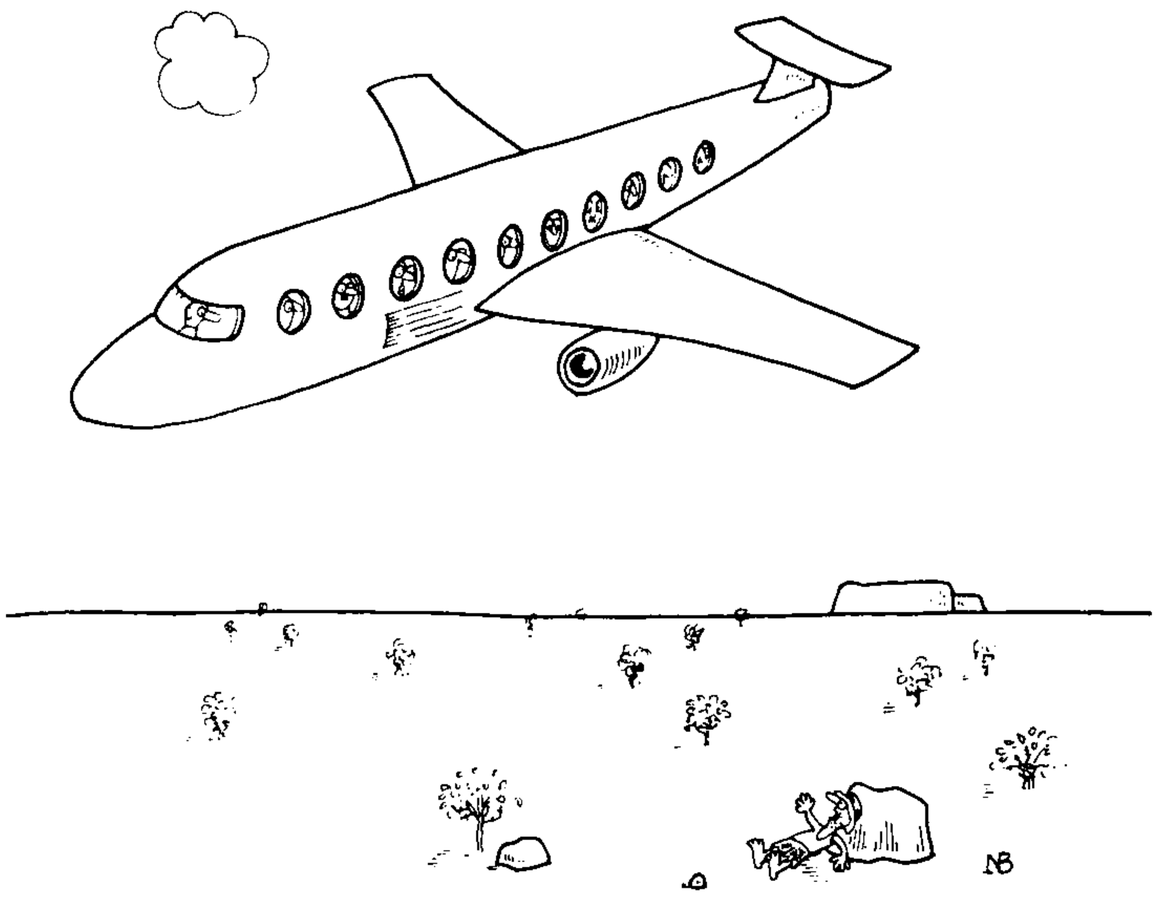
Can Buy Me, Love

The other Turds, Bingo Urquhart, Sri Veririshi Bagwash'n'go (formerly Tommy Nargs) and Okay Yoni (the widow of the late Algernon St. John Wernyss, 14th Duke of Atholl) were also present at the ceremony as Mr Topes unveiled a life-size statue of himself placed on a marble plinth with a neon sign above it reading "The Greatest Turd Of All".

Spiggy Topes is 87.

31.1.	<u>V.I.P. Visits</u>		
	21.10.93	Robert KEY M.P., and Roger FREEMAN M.P. Ministers for Roads and Transport.	Attended Transport Meeting, Lincs. County Council.
	22.10.93	Nicholas SOAMES M.P., Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Agriculture.	Attended East Lindsey Conservative Association Dinner, Skegness.
31.2.	<u>Royal Visits</u>		
	28.10.93	Baroness THATCHER of Kesteven.	Attend Guildhall Centre, Grantham for public book signing session.

Lincs. Police Committee periodic report



"Thank goodness — it's the Flying Health Service Trust"

The World's Most Famous Ex-Editor Of The Spectator Joins The Daily Hellograph

Read His First Fearless Hard-Hitting Column Today

Alexander Chancellor

HAVING recently returned from some years in America, I was astonished to see how many people in England insist on driving on the wrong side of the road. I have decided to travel everywhere by taxi — except that you can never find a yellow cab in my part of Fulham.

Another odd thing about London is how small all the buildings are these days, compared with those in New York.

Does this reflect our diminished status in the world?

English beer is very thin, I find, and also warm. Hasn't anyone in this country heard of refrigeration? Once when I was in Washington I was invited to dinner by the famous Georgetown hostess, Mrs Angie-Lou Allsopp. The beer there, I remember, was very cold indeed.

Why, I can't help wondering, do you Limeys have so many traffic cones on your freeways? Back home we *(contd p.94)*

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam
Harry Nilsson

So. Farewell
Then

Harry Nilsson.

Without You.

That was
Your hit.

Now we
Are.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

"There's a chap in the village who comes and re-shoes the fireplace once a year"

TORIES ROCKED BY NEW INFIDELITY SCANDAL

by Our Media Staff **Jane Synne and Steven Glove-Child**

DOWNING Street was reeling tonight with the disclosure that two senior Conservative newspapers had "walked out on the Government".

The two papers — named as the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, who had been faithful to the Government for nearly twenty years — were revealed to be flirting with "absolutely anyone provided they are not John Major".

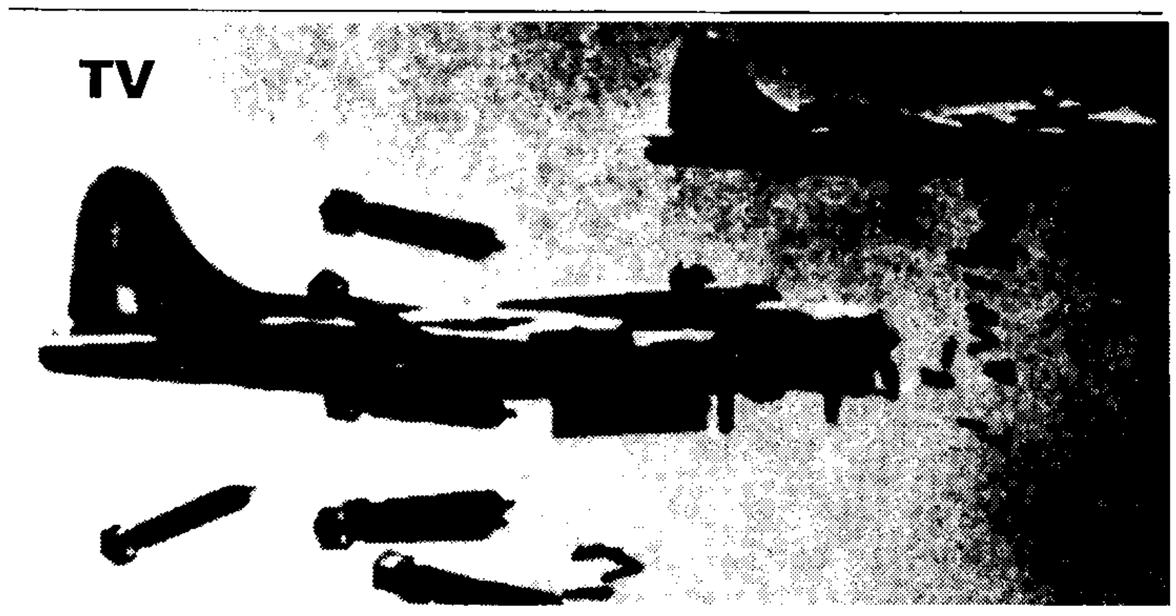
The Government was said to be heartbroken at this desertion, especially as it has been left holding the Back to Basics baby.

"Every relationship goes through a stormy patch," said the Government, "and I think it's tragic that these papers can't stand by us and give us another chance."

Alimoaning Minnies

And there are more Tory papers rumoured to be following suit. In the next few weeks it is believed the *Telegraph*, the *Times*, the *Express* and even the *Financial Times* are going to separate from the Conservatives and start thinking independently *(shurely 'living'? Ed)*.

VAT on newspapers will be 17½ per cent.



TONIGHT'S FILMS

"The Damfunders" 1994 (grey and grey)

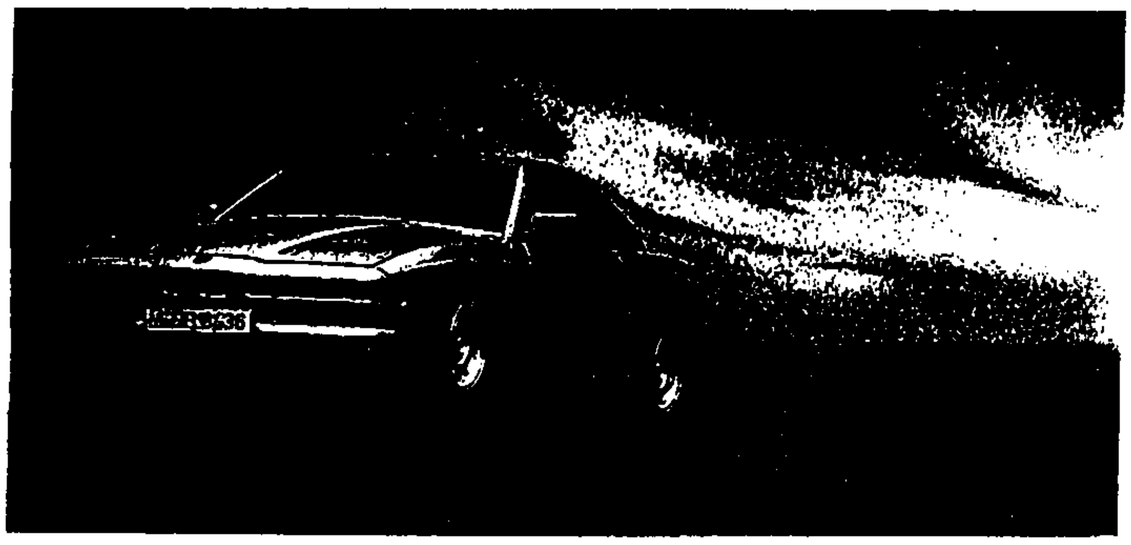
BASED on a true-life story, this classic British film tells of the daring exploits of Johnny Major and Duggy Hurd as they fight to build a huge dam in Pergau, Malaysia.

Against all the advice, they come up with an audacious plan to drop huge sums of money on the dam.

They develop a massive 234,000,000-pound bomb which, when released, goes straight from the charity budget into the hands of crooked Malayan businessmen.

Watch out for the fine footage of the Tornado warplanes that the Malaysians didn't buy in return.

SOMEONE HAS TO LEAD THE HUMAN RACE.



The new 840Ci.
What makes civilisation progress?
Strong leadership.

ULTIMATE DRIVING PLEASURE

Advert for German car, Hong Kong Tatler

A Doctor writes

Pancreatitis

AS a doctor I am often asked: "What should I do if my boyfriend is attacked by pancreatitis?"

The first thing to do is to stop your car in a lay by on the A1 and loosen his clothing, so that he is quite comfortable.

You can then administer oral relief as necessary (see my video "The Lovers Guide To Stomach Disorders" Cert. 18).

Pancreatitis, (or *Fellatio libella normalis*, to give it its full medical name) can have very serious side-effects — such as being caught by a policeman, being exposed in the Sun and being cross-examined by George Carman QC.

If you are worried about Pancreatitis you should immediately seek professional advice from a qualified lawyer.

© A Doctor.

4.00 Speaker: Dr Gerrald Hale will speak what Dyslexia is and how to recognise it and why you would find dyslexics assessets to your business.

Adult Dyslexia Organisation

The SHIRL PORTER Songbook

Hits include:

Night and Daylight Robbery

Everything Goes

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire — I Am Already

My Money Belongs To Daddy

Lovely Houses For Sale

I Get A Vote Out Of You

I Love Matthew Parris In The Times

and many more

Only £21 Million

A Westminster CD
(recorded in Enhanced District Auditor Sound)

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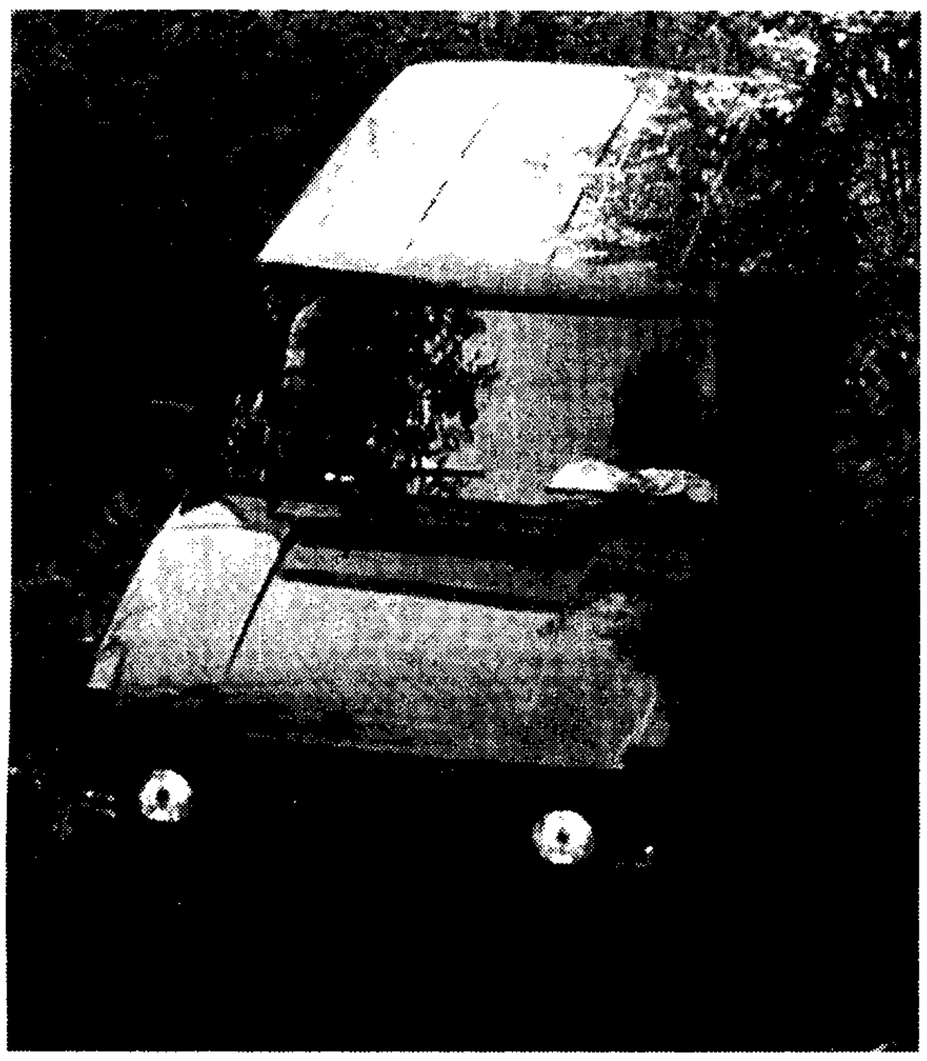


The NEW

RANGE ROVER

GT Climax

Features include: ● Manual Gearshift ● Excellent Handling ● 4 x 4 Play ● Generous Headroom ● Choice of hard or soft top.

Colours: Face Red, Police Blue, or Sausage.

"The best off-road performance this year."
What Carmasutra

"It's brilliant in the dirt."
Cars and Carman Q.C.

"Yes, oh yes."
Autospurt

(That's enough filth, Ed)

Gillian and Geoff — satisfied customers

RANGE ROVER

THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 28 1994

NEW WORDS

by Philip Howard

YEO
v. intrans. to declare fervently one's determination to stay in office and then to resign immediately. Example: "In the name of God, yeo." (Hansard, 1979) (From ye Old English)

PORTILLO
n. one who blames everyone else for his own failings or evades responsibility for his own actions. Example: "Thou weasel portillo, thou — what, wouldst yeo all day with some buxom stent?" (Baxendale in *Much Ado About Nothing*, 4.4.32)

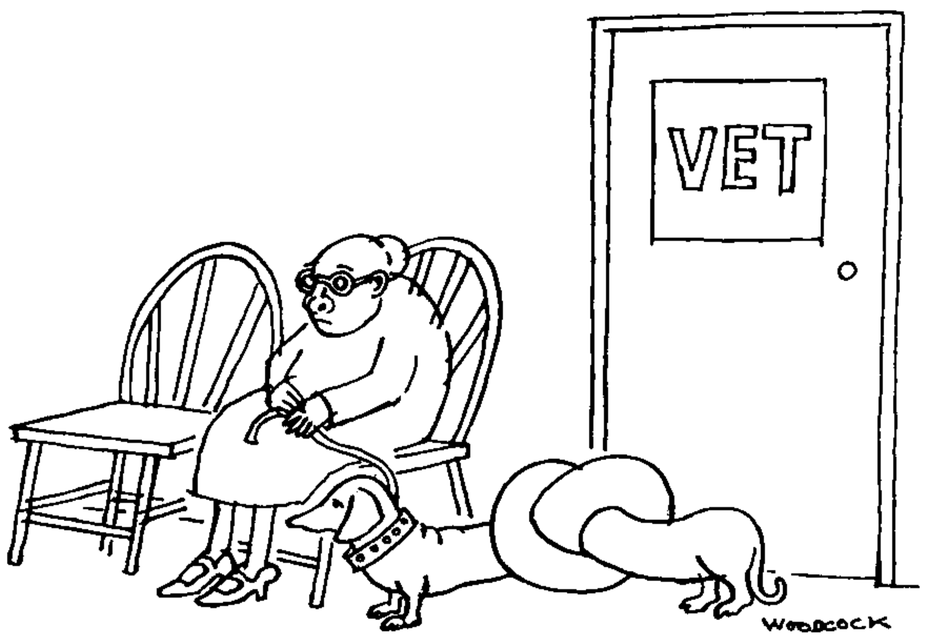
GOA
n. one who goes off to exotic locations to share his bed with a platonic friend of same sex. Example: "That Tory MP is a real goa."

MATES
n. mess, confusion, cock-up, expensive disaster — e.g. parking one's car on a double yellow line outside the Houses of Parliament and bringing central London to a halt. Example: "Sorry, darling, I seem to have made a right mates of this."

SHIRLEYPORTER
v. to buy electoral support with the taxpayers' money. Example: "Good grief, Sir Paul Beresford has been shirleyportering in Wandsworth." (Allegation in Evening Standard, 1994)

MILLICHIP
v. intrans. to dither, to fail to make up one's mind and eventually to pick the wrong man for a given job. Named from character Sir Bertram Millichip in Dickens's *No Expectations of Winning Anything*.

TAYLFORTH
n. Unexplained delay on motorway. Example: "Sorry I'm late, darling. I got caught in a taylforth on the M1." (East End slang)



GLENDA SLAGG

The Gal who gives good headlines!! Geddit??!

KEITH WATERHOUSE??!? Don't he make yer flesh creep!?! What a dirty ol' man, humiliatin' his Girl Friday by makin' her dress up in a tart's costume and bring him smoked salmon!?!?? Urgh!! And then Kinky Keith goes an' gives her the old heave-ho!?

Water-bastard!!? Geddit?!

Clear orf up Norf, Mr Crabby Columnist!?! 'oo wants to read you a-whingein' and a-whinin' about the good ol' days when fags were 2 pence a packet and the trams used to run all night?!?? Get back to yer whippets and leave the women alone!?!!

KEITH WATERHOUSE — don'tchajus'luvhim?!? At last there's someone with a bit of style!? Sex 'n' smoked salmon at lunchtime!!? Mmmm!?!?

So Keith's kiss 'n' tell cutie didn't like shimmyin' around in her suspenders??! No one forced you, darlin'!?! You only had to say no!!?

Hats off to cuddly Keith and his champagne lifestyle!?! And buzz off Miss Bigmouth Bimbo and take yer tacky tales with you!?!

COME OFF it, luv!?!? The Hackney head teacher who stopped her kiddies seein' *Romeo and Juliet*, I'm talkin' about!! Who do you think you are Ms Brown — or should I say Ms Goebbels!?!

I know what you want them to see — *Juliet and Juliet*?!?!!

As the Bard himself said: "Get a life, lady"!?!!

SO Torvill and Dean have made a comeback?!! Talk about a Bore-lero!?!? (Geddit?!?)

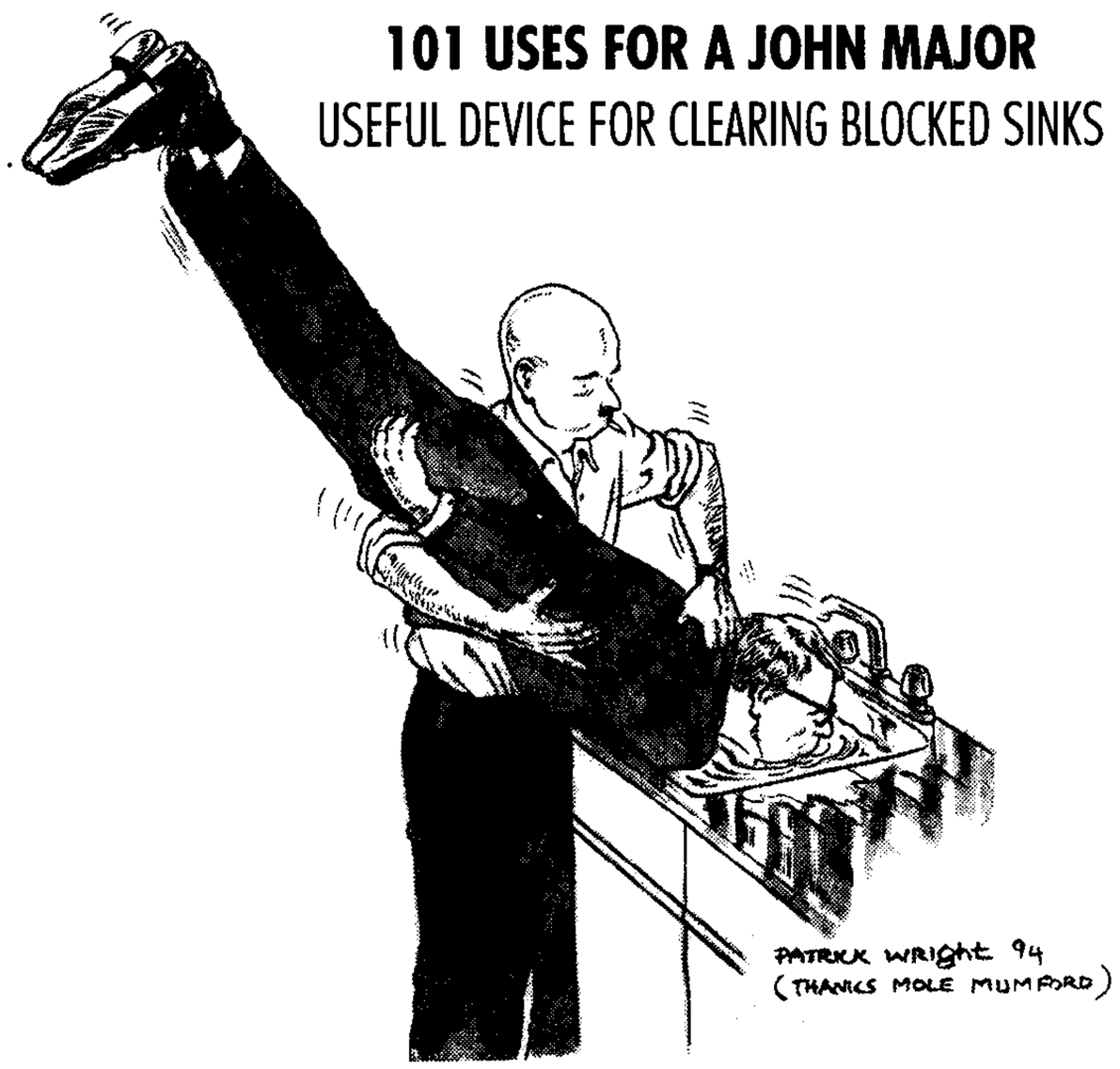
HERE they are — Glenda's A1 Lay-Guys?!! (Geddit? I don't.)

GEORGE GALLOWAY — OK, he sucks up to Saddam Hussein and he's in trouble with the whips!?!? Sounds like my kind of fella!?!?

CHRIS EVANS — OK, so your new TV show's up the creek!!?! Paddle round to my place and don't forget your toothbrush!?!?! Geddit!!?!

GEORGE ELIOT — Crazy name, crazy guy!!!?!?

Byeeeee!!!



101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR

USEFUL DEVICE FOR CLEARING BLOCKED SINKS

APOLOGY FROM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Over the past few months we may have given the impression that the term Back to Basics was in some way connected to matters of personal morality. A speech by the Prime Minister at last year's Conservative party conference in which he declared "Putting the family first — learning right from wrong — individual responsibility — traditional moral values — that's what we mean by Back to Basics" may have led some observers to conclude that the Prime Minister's "Back to Basics" initiative was in some way connected with putting the family first, learning right from wrong, individual responsibility and a return to traditional moral values.

We now accept that the prime minister meant nothing of the sort, and that his sole purpose in launching his "Back to Basics" campaign was to focus the attention on the need for children to be taught how to read and write, and for a greater measure of free trade under the Gatt reforms. These things have always of course been the bedrock of Conservative policy. We would like to offer our unreserved apology to the Prime Minister for any embarrassment that this confusion may have brought about.

Signed
Virginia Bottomley
David Hunt
Norman Fowler
Michael Howard

Another Apology from Mr Michael Portillo

At last year's conference I may have given the impression that the "Back to Basics" campaign was primarily concerned with shooting single mothers and stoning adulterers to death in the finest historical traditions of my great country, Spain, under its great leader — the late Generalissima Maggie Franco. It was. I would therefore like to make it unreservedly clear that I am gong to be the next leader of the Conservative Party, and that Mr Major is an apology for a prime minister.

This Week's Resignations

Mr David Ashby-de-la-Louche, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Ministry for Stationery: "I wish to spend more time in bed with my boyfriend," he told the prime minister.

The Earl of Loch Ness Monster, Minister of State for Motorway Maintenance: "I want to spend more time with my mistress but it might look a bit bad at the moment."

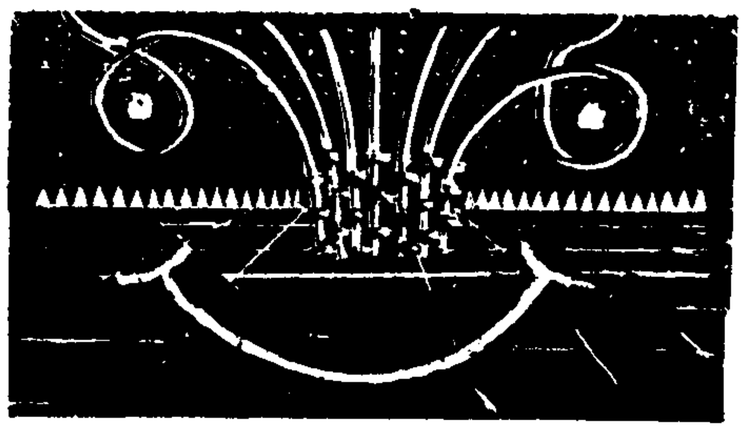
Mr Gerry Wally, Assistant Under-Secretary to the Minister for Hedgerow Replacement: "I want to spend more time with my various love-children."

Mrs Teresa Gorperson MP: "I'm not going to resign and if you say I am, I'll sue you."

Mr Kenneth Clark, Mr Michael Heseltine, Mr Michael Rifkind: "We will all resign if Lord Justice Scott says we did anything wrong — so there. Watch it Scotty, we've got your number. We know where you live. And that pretty little Miss Baxendale. Wouldn't like anything nasty to happen to her round the back of the Inns of Court, would we? Hezza can get very nasty, if he's rubbed up the wrong way. Know what we mean?"

(To be continued next week)

DIARY



DAVID HARE

The State of Britain, Part One: Three days ago, I went to a party. I don't often go to parties, because I'm not that kind of person, I'm a playwright, with more serious concerns. But I went to this one. By bus, of course. I'm not the sort of person who takes taxis. So I hailed a double-decker in the King's Road and told the driver to take me to Islington. He was then to wait for me outside the party for an hour or two and take me back. The instructions were quite clear. But of course this is Thatcher's Britain, so when I left the party — a party I didn't particularly enjoy, by the way, it was hardly serious at all and full of "amusing" people — the bus was nowhere to be seen (typical) and I was forced to hail, against all my instincts, a black cab. Out of sympathy with the driver I sat with him in the front, observing, observing, observing, my mind racing back to one of those rare defining moments, disproportionately significant but peculiarly illuminating, that had occurred back at the party.

I had been standing in the corner of the room with the dirty paper cup I had specially brought with me, when a man had come over — a tall, flashy type, with an easy smile, wearing a fashionable "tie". He said: "You look a bit lonely, may I introduce myself?" He then introduced himself. I didn't reply, preferring to observe, as most serious playwrights do. He then said — again that fake smile — "And who are you?"

I was outraged, utterly outraged. And flabbergasted. Shocked too. Shocked, outraged and flabbergasted. Not for me, of course, but for my profession, and the whole of British Theatre, from the lowest understudy right up to the most brilliant and dangerous playwright (whether this is me or not is beside the point). Why was this man — this man in his fashionable tie, with his promiscuous smile and his over-attentive handshake — pretending not to know who the hell I was? This was a sign of our inexorable national decline, as significant and painful in its way as the Miners Strike or the Falklands Conflict.

The State of Britain, Part Two: As the hurt and the horror surged within me, I felt driven to speak. "I'm David Hare," I said.

"David Hare!" he repeated, "Goodness! I really enjoy all your plays — you're one of the greatest living playwrights, in my opinion!"

Note that patronising, biassed and artfully demeaning tone in a statement riddled with the foul odour of ruling class condescension: "*ONE OF* the greatest *LIVING* playwrights, *IN MY OPINION*". Only in Britain — tired, sick, dislocated, dying Britain — in the 1990s could it be considered "fashionable" to denigrate a serious playwright in this way. When I got home, I immediately wrote a cool letter to the host of the party, questioning his ethics in inviting me to a function at which there were people who openly hated me, roundly condemning his loathsome hypocrisy in not warning me of his treachery. He eventually replied with some sort of an apology. Which all goes to show that here in Thatcher's Britain, the national pastime — the national characteristic — is to apologise, apologise, apologise. When will we as a nation have the courage to start to stand up for ourselves?

The State of Britain, Part Three: I've tried to bring out something of this and other symptoms of our national decline in my new play, *Cardboard Characters* — the first part of my powerful new *Forty Winks* trilogy consisting of *Cardboard Characters, Dialogue Dreary* and *An Absence of Interest* — which is currently being staged at The National Theatre. *An Absence of Interest* seeks to analyse the system whereby the ruling classes use the money gained from the working classes to finance other members of the ruling classes to write a trilogy about how they take money from the working classes to finance their systems, a trilogy which will be visited, I hope, not only by other members of the ruling classes but by a few representatives of the working class as well. It is a tremendously strong piece, devastating in its indictment of the inherent hypocrisy of those involved in its creation.

The State of Britain, Part Four: In this truly moving piece of dialogue, the main character is a brilliant yet sensitive playwright, who some people say is based on me, but is obviously NOT me at all — I'm not Welsh. In this truly moving piece of dialogue the playwright character, who is called Daffyd Hare, confronts what he sees as the malaise in the post-colonial Britain:

JACK: Cigarette?

DAFFYD: No thanks.

JACK: You don't want a cigarette?

DAFFYD: Not at the moment. No thanks.

JACK: Don't smoke?

DAFFYD: Only when I stop to think about the malaise in post-colonial Britain which stems, directly or indirectly, from our national sense of dislocation, springing, whether consciously or not, from our deeply rooted inability to shed the sense of past glories, a failure which may or may not be rooted in our concurrent inability to face up to the challenges of the future, to develop and expand those institutions that are crumbling around us, unloved and unwanted, fostering an abandoned generation without pride or sense of purpose. *(He frowns. Something is on his mind)*

JACK: Yeah. I keep meaning to give up, too. I did once, for a couple of months, but then I went back. Mug's game, really.

DAFFYD: You're right there, Jack.

JACK: It's not as though I even like the taste, much. How about you?

DAFFYD: I'd relish the taste more if it didn't make me remember the days when hope beat in our hearts, when it seemed as if this country was marching forward into a new age, an age of optimism, an age in which society would look after those who were unable, for whatever reason, to –

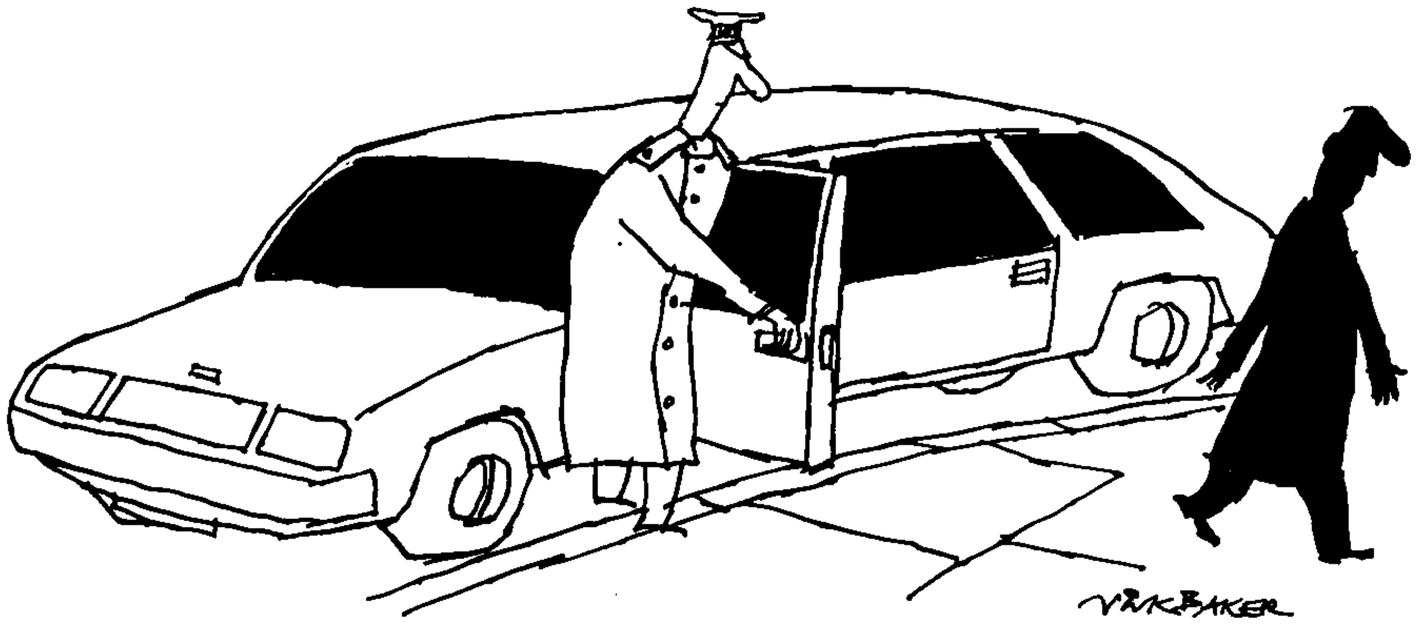
JACK *(Looking at watch):* Lordy be, Daffyd — is that the time? I must be going. Cheerio, then. Lovely talking to you.

DAFFYD *(Frowns):* I've always wanted to know the answer. The answer to one question. A question that has haunted me. And the question is. After two and a half hours, is this all it's been about? Is it? Well, is it?

(The lights fade)

Well — is it?

(The sound of "Land of Hope and Glory" grows louder. Curtain)



12 HB PENCILS

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Literary Review

The Indescribably-portentous

The First Church of the New Millenium
Bryan Appleyard
(Doubleday, £14.99)

THERE never was a newspaper columnist who didn't aim higher. The ancient prejudice against penny-a-liners, Thackeray's gentlemen of the corporation of the goose-quill, endures, and if your average tabloid or broadsheet hack has an anxiety it is generally that he or she isn't being taken seriously enough.

Ambition, consequently, infects these hierarchies like a kind of distemper. The TV critic fancies himself as a political pundit; the political pundit fancies himself as a cultural commentator. At the very top of the heap comes the cultural commentator, who for some reason imagines he can write the novel which will make Proust's shade really sit up and pay attention, don't you know.

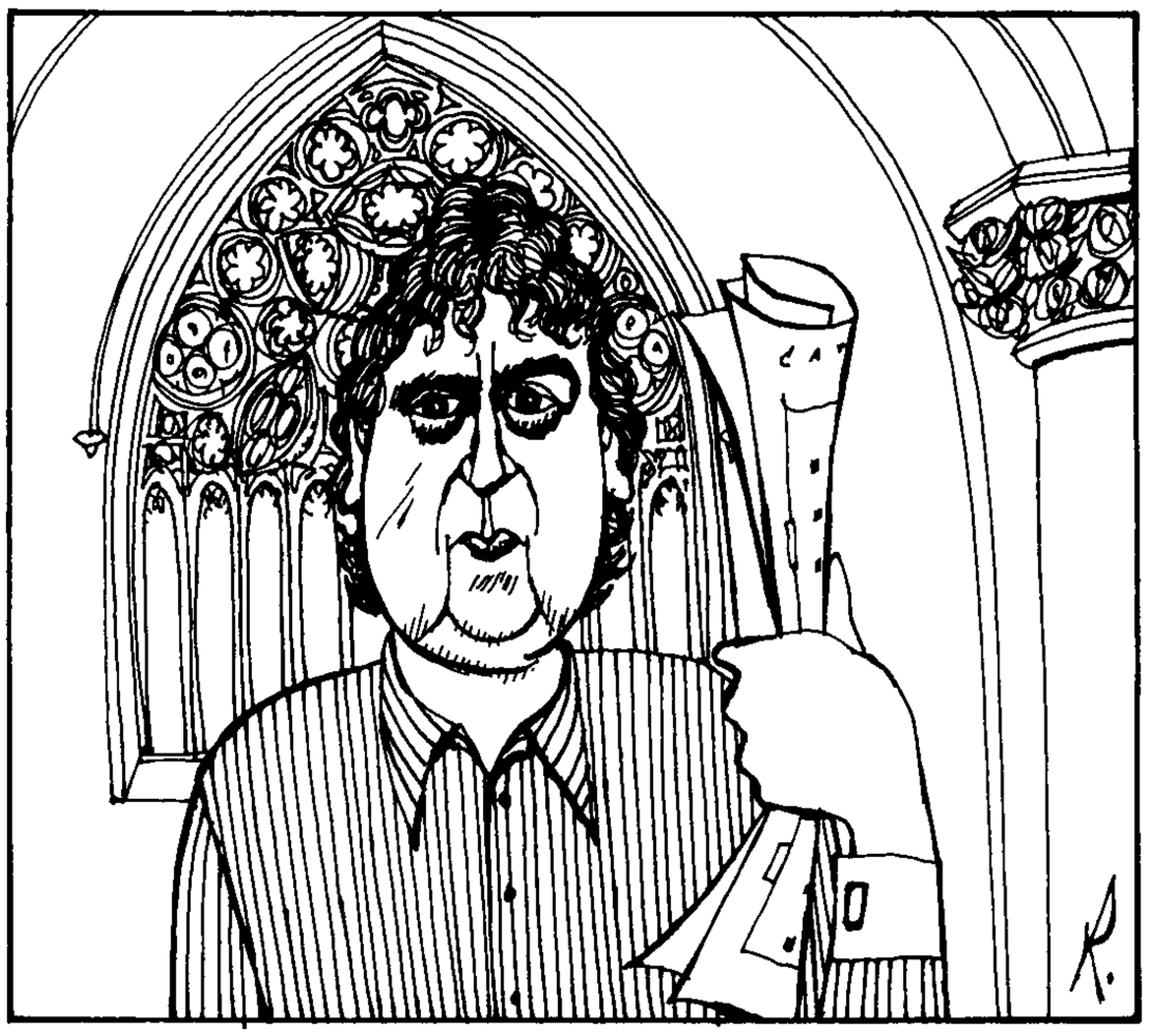
No one, at any rate, could accuse Bryan Appleyard — formerly the impresario of "Bryan Appleyard's Sunday Forum" in the *Sunday Times*, since hired at some unimaginable salary by the *Independent* — of not taking himself seriously. *The First Church of the New Millennium* fairly bristles with beetle-browed intent.

No Hampstead adulteries or mimsy Tuscan chatter for this boy! Set in an England lurching on the cusp of the 21st century, it assembles most of the preoccupations familiar to Appleyard's readers — architecture, popular science, the machine age — into what some puzzled Doubleday publicist has marked down as "a brilliant, painful and witty fable for our time".

The problems facing Stephen Rix, Appleyard's architect hero, start when he walks into a field outside his country retreat and finds himself inside an enormous Gothic cathedral. An hallucination? A vision? A sign? Rix's statuesque wife thinks he's evading his responsibilities; his elfin mistress has her doubts; Orlando, his camp business partner, wishes he'd get back to the lucrative blocks of flats. Fortunately Hirtenstein, the manic property developer, is prepared to subsidise this folly — he sees it as a futuristic leisure centre — and after the local council has been bribed and persuaded into approval the project steams ahead.

All this comes interspersed with some prophetic stuff about virtual reality, space travel — Captain Dale McCluskey and his mission to Mars is a running motif — and end-of-century designer drugs. The whole, concluding at the cathedral's opening ceremony when Rix, paralysed from a car-smash, decides to destroy his baby — might just be read as a fable of consumerism ruining people's dreams, written by someone with a working knowledge of Golding's *The Spire*.

But while it was kind of Mr Appleyard to share his undoubtedly groovy thoughts about the future with us in this way, one or two teeny doubts remain. Anyone approaching

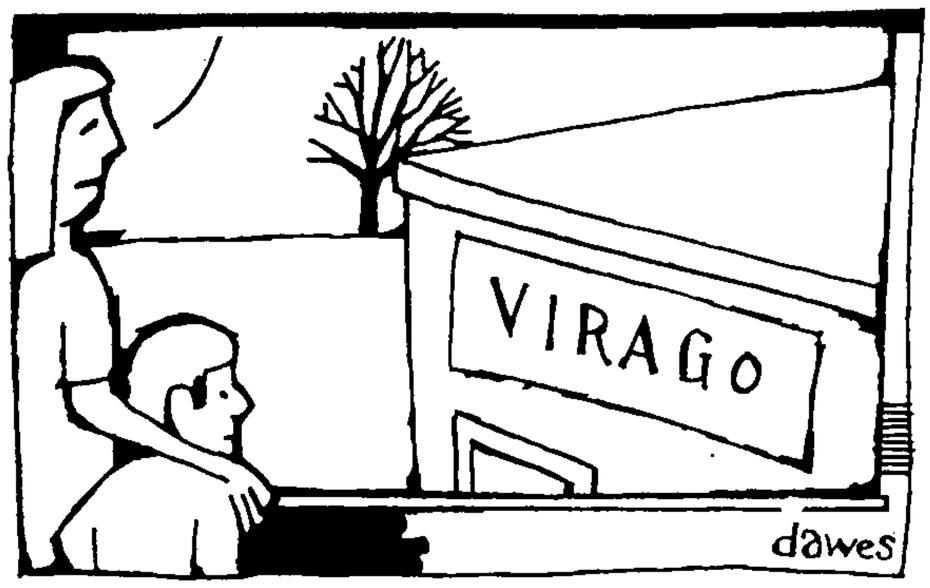


the work of a first-time novelist has necessarily to ask one or two questions. Can he or she do the characterisation? Or the plot? Or the dialogue? The answers in Mr Appleyard's case are: no, not really, and no *with emphasis*. What he really likes doing is descriptions, hulking two-page evocations of hair-dressing salons, architecture, gymnasiums, and, just occasionally, the portentous flourish.

Some of these portentous flourishes are worth quoting at length. Of a shopping mall: "Small bands of teenagers, tense and malodorous, swirled about each other like planetary systems, while edging nervously and self-consciously through the crowd, their eyes flicking warily to detect significant contact." Of a clock: "This clock had no depth, how could it tell the time? It would tell us what came after eleven thirteen, but only when it came. For the moment, however, its message fitted the likely facts."

Of an encounter with his mistress: "The words 'no problem, no problem' whispered in my mind as I swam peacefully into her arms and moved into the controlling logic of her body."

The foregoing is printed on hard, expensive paper, costs £14.99, and was presumably exclaimed over by the author, his family, his agent and the kind people at Doubleday. A false distinction, perhaps, but the amount of money Mr Appleyard received for it would probably keep a family of five in comfort for the best part of a year.



"One day, son, all this will be your sister's"

Books & Bookmen

☐ IT'S HAPPY families time again in publishing — and the usual pack has been shuffled and dealt out again. The reverend Cohen at Hodder-Headline is replaced by Roland Philipps, husband of literary agent Felicity Rubinstein, while Mary Loring, wife of HarperCollins' Nick Sayers, resurfaces at Arrow. Michael "Barrymore" Attenborough pops up, or 10 per cent of him does, at Mark McCormack's International Management Group, where he will try to persuade golfers, ice skaters and athletes to write their memoirs.

Michael is hardly on speaking terms with his brother Philip, who amazingly remains on the board of Tim Steely-Hatchetman's Hodder-Headline, thus lending it spurious credibility, Philip having been president of the Publishers' Association.

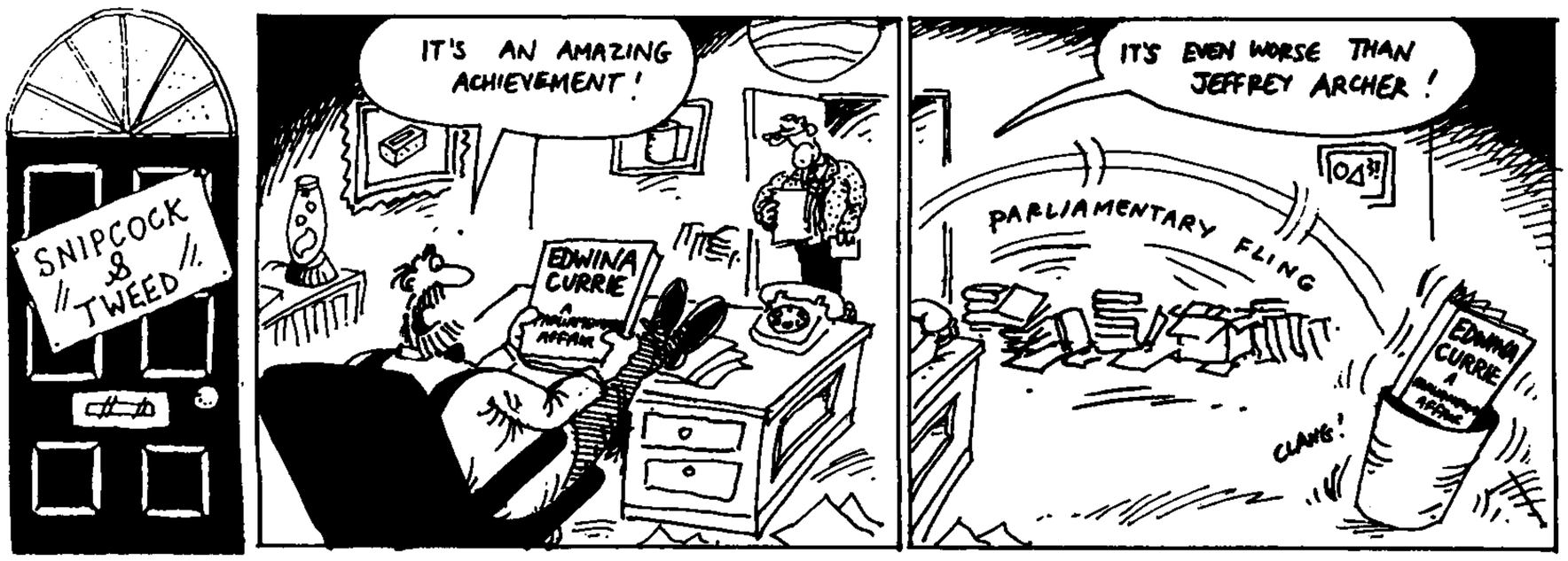
Steely-Hatchetman has got rid of all the Hodder family, yet Philip has the crass insensitivity to take the Headline shilling to the tune of £20,000 per annum as non-executive chairperson, giving Hatchetman a modicum of respectability which his recent actions do not deserve.

Hodder-Headline have lost James Herbert and Jeffrey Archer to publishing's Mr Blobby, ex-Hodder sales director Eddie Bell, and are in the near future likely to lose, and not necessarily to Eddie, grim Stephen King and earnest John le Carré. Both authors, who are proper writers, are increasingly fed up with the antics of the new regime. Steely-Hatchetman, who doesn't see why authors should be treated as human beings, will be quietly delighted when the best-selling authors move to pastures new, and he can create more Josephine Coxes.

■ A RARE literary agent of integrity is Lavinia Trevor, who until recently headed up, as the Americans would say, William Morris's UK literary end. The end came for Lavinia when Robert Gottlieb, head of the literary department in New York, sold a book, which Lavinia had sold months before, to a British publisher for a sum greatly in excess of that which Lavinia had agreed. Gottlieb ordered Trevor to unscramble her deal, which she declined to do, being a woman of principle. She was sacked, and has now started her own literary agency.

Her replacement was to have been Jonathan Lloyd, smooth ex-publisher of HarperCollins, castrated and thrown on the scrap pile by Eddie Bell. Having offered Lollipop the job, William Morris reneged on the deal. Lloyd will instead now join the world's worst literary agency, Curtis Brown, and will probably never be heard of again.

'Bookworm'



CHANNEL TUNNEL

Calais or bust?

EUROTUNNEL must make £600 million a year to pay interest on its colossal debts — and it can only do so by capturing all the present traffic on freight and passenger services, and all the income from duty-free sales currently earned on the short ferry crossings.

This is beyond the dreams of avarice, so its debt must increase and the City view remains that the company will enter the Humber Bridge club, spending all its revenue on interest on a debt that can never be repaid because the interest will always be greater than income.

It may try to slash prices to kill off competitors, as Alistair Morton has hinted, but given the size of the debt (£10 billion) it would need an unusually patient and forbearing collection of bankers to wait for that to happen. The awkward fact is that the tunnel, our prestige emblem, is not and cannot be viable.

Are the ferry companies laughing? Not quite. They fear that Eurotunnel will go bust and that a new company, largely free of debt, will then take over and be able to charge low fares and drive the ferries out of business.

Some people have always suspected this was the hidden agenda that kept the project alive.

Dover for the discontented

BRITISH RAIL, or whoever buys it, expects to do very nicely from the Channel tunnel when through-trains start up from Waterloo to Paris — so nothing will be done that might help passengers who prefer the option of train and ferry.

"Life will not exist beyond Folkestone," says Dover chamber of commerce, meaning that Dover will continue to be given a second-rate service and that BR has no intention of extending the fast rail link to Dover giving foot passengers on the train a choice between the tunnel from Folkestone or the ferry from Dover.

Nor will there be extra trains on the thinly-served service to Folkestone Harbour from where ferries sail to Boulogne, because the line will be needed for tunnel trains.

Nor does BR intend to help people using Dover by matching the trains to the ships. The railway currently ends at the west dock and the ferries leave from the east dock, so passengers have to get out and go on a 15-minute bus ride with all their luggage to the boat. This is a good way to discourage them from taking the train and the boat from Dover.

Dover district council, the chamber of commerce and MPs are pushing for a change, but so long as BR, or its successor, stands to make money from the tunnel nothing will change.

Doctrine the figures

WHEN plans for the Channel tunnel rail link were shelved in 1990 because the government would not pay the £1 billion subsidy demanded by the Trafalgar House consortium for building and running it, the treasury had an excuse. If British Rail were allowed to do the job, no subsidy would be required.

However, now that the railways are being privatised, the treasury has produced a subsidy of up to £1.5 billion for the private consortium, now led by GEC, on the ground that there is no alternative: BR could still do the job without a subsidy, but is *hors de combat* and heading for extinction.

There may seem to be something slightly wrong with this reasoning, but rest assured that the No 10 policy unit has reassured everyone it is doctrinally sound.

STUDENT LOANS

Sums that don't add up

THE Student Loans Company (SLC) will this year achieve its goal of turning the majority of students currently in higher education into credit-hungry debtors like the rest of the country.

Sadly this milestone, while notable, looks increasingly likely to herald the SLC's ultimate financial meltdown as it is unable ever to balance its books.

When SLC started in 1990 chairman Malcolm Hurlston predicted that 80 percent of undergraduates would apply for loans, producing a substantial — albeit reluctant — customer base and the eventual privatisation of the loan book before the end of the decade. Only 28 percent of students took out loans.

The government's freeze on grants helped SLC increase its uptake, and last year 44 percent of eligible students signed agreements. With so many students now ensnared there should be a triumphant atmosphere in the SLC's Glasgow bunker. Instead there is a sense of foreboding.

In November SLC announced that 12,500 of the 144,000 graduates due to have started repaying loans in April 1993 were in arrears. Ritual threats of litigation were issued by SLC's image conscious chief executive Ronald Harrison, but less emphasis was put on another statistic: that a further 53,000 of those due to make repayments were unable to do so due to low wages or unemployment.

When the government set up SLC it decided that students would not have to make repayments until their gross income exceeded 85 percent of national average earnings. Well over a third of 1992's undergraduates fell into this non-repaying category and the position is likely to have worsened in 1993, as salaries for new graduates continued to fall. The bleak trend will continue thanks to unemployment and the government's policy of producing more graduates.

Kenneth Clarke's decision to cut grants from the start of the next academic year, while simultaneously increasing loan limits, means students will graduate owing larger than expected sums to SLC, even assuming that tuition fees aren't introduced after the next election. Typically undergraduates currently borrow £1,000 for each year of their course. This figure will now dramatically increase not least because students are no longer eligible for unemployment benefits during vacations or housing benefit at any time.

A substantial proportion of those borrowing in this and subsequent years will never earn enough to repay their loans. And while it is unclear what the government will do, one certainty is that the private sector will refuse to take over the SLC's portfolio of increasingly high, unsecured loans.

WATER NEWS

Torrent of abuse

IAN BYATT, director of Ofwat, the water regulator, is trying to get rid of Diana Scott, chair of the Yorkshire customer service committee, because she is doing what she is supposed to do — questioning his decisions on behalf of the consumer.

In particular she has challenged Byatt on compulsory metering of new homes. He is a former treasury high-flier obsessed with the "monetarist" idea of charging people for the quantity of water they use instead of making them pay a standard amount based on rateable value, as they have done for 150 years.

Mrs Scott and her committee wanted a better method and suggested that with the abolition of rates, homes should be assessed on an assigned rateable value. Byatt was apoplectic. He phoned Scott and there was a shouting match which ended when she put down the phone. Soon after a friend rang her and said: "Guess what, Diana. I've been offered your job."

Ofwat says there is "no major row" between Byatt and Scott. "Nobody has been offered her job. When a decision has been made about any reappointment or a new appointment, we will be making an announcement," a spokeswoman told the *Eye*. Keep watching.

POLICE 5

Welsh wails

WHEN debt-ridden South Wales police asked the royals to stop visiting them, Dai Knacker — aka chief constable Robert Lawrence — was somewhat economical with the truth when revealing the cost of such trips.

Blaming his force's escalating debt on accounting errors and mass retirements which had led to larger superannuation and pension payments, the boyo in blue said policing royal visits cost £500,000. Later in December, the true cost last year was found to be less than half that: £230,000.

By contrast, the police debt was first reported as being in six figures — and by mid-December it had risen to £2 million, confirming an accounting cock-up of massive proportions. Appeals to the various Glamorgan county councils, themselves facing cuts, fell on deaf ears, and Lawrence was forced to propose the closure of 22 police stations, except when they were unmanned.

He has now effected even more bizarre cuts: most police station patrols are cut to one police car per shift — and that car is only allowed to cover 35 miles unless officers have a very good reason to drive further.

Meanwhile, dilapidated police stations are themselves falling foul of the law. Porth station in the Rhondda is being closed in an enforcement action by health and safety officers.

Rhymney police have been told not to fill up their Ford Escort diesel at local garages but to drive to Merthyr or Caerffili police stations for diesel. The Escort is useless in a chase and the petrol-driven van, which is a bit nippier, was parked outside the station over Christmas — without even enough petrol in it for a chase!

Bizarrely, despite having one of the highest densities of population outside the major cities, South Wales police is classified as a semi-rural force, with its funding being cut as a result. So much for Tory law 'n' order.

JOBS FOR THE BOYS

The Black — and blue — Country

MORE news from the cosy world of the quango — this time the Black Country development corporation (BCDC), whose fatcat directors were appointed by the Conservative government to usurp elected local authorities in Wolverhampton, Walsall and Sandwell.

So far the BCDC has spent £207 million of public money on development plans, most of which have collapsed, while local unemployment has risen by 6 per cent.

If the natives are suffering, the BCDC directors, appointed by various Tory environment secretaries, have been doing very nicely thank you, handing out juicy grants to their respective companies.

● First there was the £1.8 million grant to Slough Properties, made when one of its directors, Roger Carey, chaired the BCDC grants committee.

● Then came the £177,000 grant to a steel firm, William King Ltd, run by Michael Worley, a member of the same committee.

● Next was a £175,000 grant to Accles and Pollock — a subsidiary of TI Group when Graham MacKenzie, a TI director, was also a BCDC director.

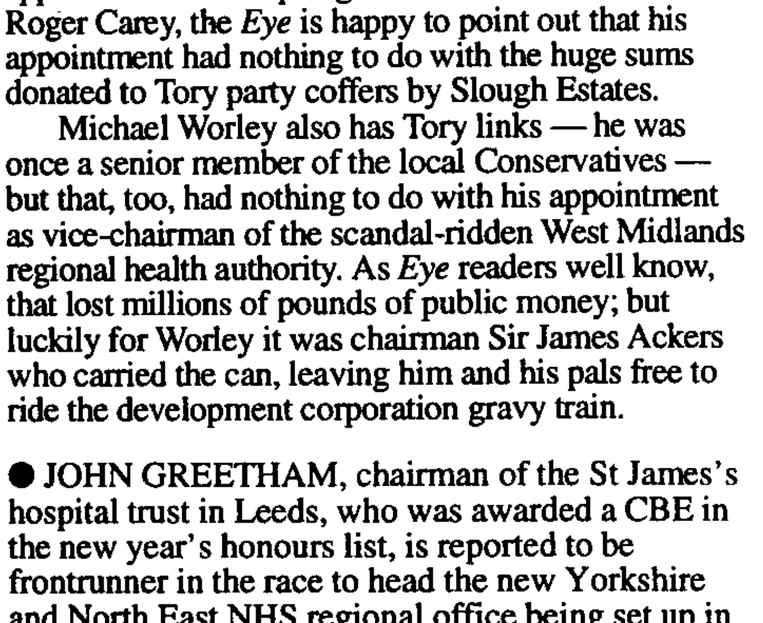
● Further handouts followed, including two more to TI Group subsidiaries and two to Triplex Lloyd — when Mrs Jean Denton was a director of both that firm... and the BCDC.

Meanwhile Sir Bill Francis, BCDC chairman, is doing his best to disguise his abysmal record on employment, claiming recently in the BCDC's accounts that he had created 600 jobs in Sandwell council alone. In fact the council had simply moved offices, shifting staff into the BCDC area. But then Francis has to do something to justify the £24,605 he earns for two days work a week.

It has been a puzzle how the Tories choose appointees to these quangoes. But in the case of Roger Carey, the *Eye* is happy to point out that his appointment had nothing to do with the huge sums donated to Tory party coffers by Slough Estates.

Michael Worley also has Tory links — he was once a senior member of the local Conservatives — but that, too, had nothing to do with his appointment as vice-chairman of the scandal-ridden West Midlands regional health authority. As *Eye* readers well know, that lost millions of pounds of public money; but luckily for Worley it was chairman Sir James Ackers who carried the can, leaving him and his pals free to ride the development corporation gravy train.

● JOHN GREETHAM, chairman of the St James's hospital trust in Leeds, who was awarded a CBE in the new year's honours list, is reported to be frontrunner in the race to head the new Yorkshire and North East NHS regional office being set up in April. He is perfectly qualified to lead one of the new mega authorities in the "non-political" NHS: he is a former Tory councillor.



DOING THE QUANGO

ENERGY NEWS

Jeremiah Thorp

WHEN the hearing into Greenpeace's case against the Thorp plutonium factory at Sellafield opens in the high court the week after next, it will be a major test of the independence of the British legal system. The judge will effectively be invited to rule that the government has exceeded its power.

The argument is that it acted illegally under the Radioactive Substances Act, which lays down that before any member of the public may be exposed to radiation, the exposure has to be justified.

No one disputes that the Thorp reprocessing plant will increase radiation in the future. Greenpeace says the only way to justify it is to examine all the issues surrounding it, including the alternative of dry storage, at a public inquiry. So the high court is not being asked to go so far as to say that the government's decision was wrong; it is simply that the government should now submit the issue to the normal scrutiny of a public inquiry.

Look, no policy

THE government, issuing its long-awaited gobbledegook guidelines on planning applications for opencast coal mines (see *Eye* 836), has finally admitted it has no energy policy.

Ordinary folk may have trouble grasping why the countryside needs to be torn apart to get at coal for which the government insists there is no market, but let that pass: the guidelines repeat the nonsense that "it would be against the national interest to refuse permission for coal extraction".

Opencasting is justified because it is cheaper than deep mining. But is it "cheaper" than spending millions of pounds on closing pits and making miners redundant? Only free-marketeers like energy minister Tim Eggar and his overlord Michael Heseltine could answer that one.

No question mark hangs over national energy policy, however. For as the department of the environment's opencast guidelines state, there isn't a policy. "The government does not intend to impose all-embracing plans about how much energy of what kind should be produced or consumed by whom... It believes this can best be achieved through the operation of competitive and open markets." The child miners of Colombia will surely agree with that.

Silent knight

PROFESSOR John Knill was knighted in the new year's honours list for services to secrecy.

As chairman of Rawmac, the radioactive waste management advisory committee, he won the approval of environment secretary John "Shitbag" Gummer by refusing to give the Campaign for Freedom of Information (CFI) the results of his committee's investigation into Thorp.

Under the environmental information regulations, which Britain acquired from Brussels, all "public bodies" are obliged to give information that they hold on the environment.

Professor Knill claimed Rawmac was not a public body. But the CFI retorted that it had been listed by the department of the environment as one of the bodies that would be covered by the regulations. The professor stood firm, insisting that his committee had no "public responsibilities" — so arise, Sir John.

CURSE OF GNOME

No Exact Change left from £6 million

FOUR YEARS ago the *Eye* was sued for libel by Arden Guy McClelland, an American-born businessman who was setting up a chain of *bureaux de change* across Europe under the name Exact Change.

His lawyer, Mr Peter Carter-Fuck (for it was he), insisted there was "no foundation to the suggestion in the article that investors had been deceived into providing very substantial funds to an unsuccessful company". The article was "highly defamatory" of both Mr McClelland and his company, Maccorp Holdings.

Two months ago, Maccorp crashed with debts of £6 million and more writs stacked against it than the current crop of Tory MPs have illegitimate children.

Claims of fraud, falsification of documents and tax evasion have been filed in Spain and Gibraltar. Maccorp's seven Hungarian bureaux are being investigated by the state central bank. A Spanish court has ordered McClelland's arrest and extradition from the UK. A creditors' meeting has been called for 11 February by receivers Arthur Anderson to salvage what they can from the ruins.

The collapse of Maccorp has left pensioners reeling. For although shareholders in the venture included the Royal Trust Bank, Allied Irish Banks and County Natwest Ventures, part of the Natwest empire, £1.25 million was also invested by trustees of the British Coal and British Rail pension funds (the same trustees who have fiercely resisted attempts by NUM president Arthur Scargill to oversee their decisions).

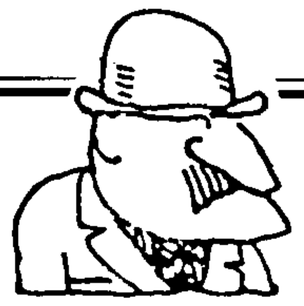
How did it happen? There certainly seems to have been a slight lack of due diligence in checking McClelland's past record before showering him with pensioners' savings. Only months before the launch of Maccorp, for example, McClelland's previous business, Vitari, a frozen food company, nosedived into receivership owing £2 million. Quizzed about this collapse, McClelland said it had happened after he quit Vitari; this the *Eye* accepts. However, he also claimed to have severed all links with Vitari. Yet, mysteriously, two years later he was still living in a property in Maida Vale rented in the name of Vitari, with 18 months' rent overdue.

Another reason for the investors' misplaced confidence in McClelland seems to have been the company he kept. Right from the outset he hired only the most expensive "blue chip" names as advisers: Herbert Smith as commercial solicitors, Ernst Young as auditors, and Peter Carter-Fuck to frighten off any critics.

But perhaps the most important reason for McClelland's success was his skill at understanding what really matters in the City — lavish corporate hospitality. Even when Maccorp was struggling with disastrous losses, he still knew the wisdom of spending tens of thousands of pounds on a hunting junket in Czechoslovakia for the key moneymen and advisers.

According to eye-witnesses, thousands of birds were shot during this costly spree. But once again, it is long-suffering pensioners who seem to have been the sitting ducks.

FOOTNOTES RETURNS NEXT ISSUE



In the City

THE SOON to be not *Independent* at all is high on integrity, especially where matters concerning Polly Peck and its much- maligned former chairman Asil Nadir are concerned. Earlier this month it lambasted joint administrator Michael Jordan — a particular target of Nadir — in censorious editorial tones ("Undertakers who had better display integrity"). This followed its disclosure that wines, flowers and a car had been provided by a Polly Peck company but only partly paid for by Jordan.

That item, like most if not all of a flurry of pro-Nadir articles in recent months, was written by Tim Kelsey who at the time or shortly before had been visiting the fugitive fraudster in his Northern Cyprus refuge. The financially strapped *Independent*'s seeming preparedness to fly Kelsey to meet Nadir has surprised City Road colleagues whose requests for foreign travel have been met with the response that no money was available. No doubt in order to preserve its reputation for impartiality, the cash-poor but integrity-rich newspaper has ensured it picked up the tab for any flights or accommodation at the still Polly Peck owned but Nadir hijacked Jasmine Court hotel.

All the more puzzling therefore that the moralising *Independent* and Kelsey would appear to be linked with inquiries being made for some weeks by private detectives into two Scotland Yard detectives assigned to the Serious Farce Office's Nadir team.

Pretext calls have been made to the SFO seeking confirmation of the dates of birth of Det. Supt. James Davies and Det. Con. Andrew Barnes. The initial attempt was on the basis of a purported inquiry from the Department of Social Security. The second, more imaginative, ploy involved a supposed attempt to trace the beneficiary of an inheritance.

Coincidentally, over recent weeks the SFO and Scotland Yard have received inquiries from the *Independent*, the *Telegraph* and BBC's *Panorama*, all seeking information about Davies and Barnes. It is also no doubt entirely coincidental that the journalists concerned, who just happen to include Kelsey, have all been keen to expose the victimisation of Nadir by politicians and the SFO.

It is also doubtless purely accidental that approaches have been made to private detectives — during which Kelsey and/or the *Independent* have been mentioned — seeking to retain their services for obtaining personal information about police officers at the SFO. Any such suggestion is obviously a fabrication as the loss-making paper would surely not have the hundreds if not thousands to waste on such delicate and potentially embarrassing inquiries which it pays intrepid investigators like Kelsey to carry out!

Why is this personal information so valuable and to whom? It would seem that it relates to visits made to Switzerland by police officers dealing with the Nadir case and in particular the role of career criminal and self-confessed liar Michael Francis, who claimed to have evidence of a £3.5 million plot to bribe the Nadir trial judge which he now admits he invented. Francis maintains that he was pressured into concocting the bribe plot by the police because the SFO case was too weak to succeed. To justify this claim he has told journalists — including Kelsey who published the "revelation" that he had invented the plot — he met police officers in Switzerland during 1991. If true, this would conflict with the SFO version of events, which says no contacts took place until 1992. And that would both bolster Francis's claims about the plot and support Nadir's claim of prosecutorial misconduct which he wants to use to halt the criminal proceedings, thereby opening the door to a return to Britain from an increasingly less friendly Northern Cyprus.

No doubt through their own investigative endeavours rather than those of the Nadir camp, those hacks seen as sympathetic would seem to have obtained entries from hotel registers or immigration records which show that Yard detectives were indeed in Switzerland during 1991. It is this information which seems to require the confirmation of the Davies and Barnes birth dates.

In fact it is no secret that Yard detectives were in Switzerland during 1991. They were there in relation to investigations concerning Nadir lieutenants Elizabeth Forsyth and Jason Davies (no relation) as well as the innumerable Swiss companies and bank accounts controlled by Nadir. These visits are well known to Nadir if not to Francis.

Should the Francis version ever appear in the *Independent*, readers can be assured, as Kelsey informed the *Eye*, that it will be because they can "independently prove" what is published. For it is not only undertakers "who had better display integrity".

BROKER T.C. Coombs may be dead but its ghost is alive and well, especially in Canada where the founder members of the Stock Exchange's List of Usual Suspects disinterred many an investment "opportunity" for luckless clients. One such was the Alberta-listed Cycomm International, once Sonatel Telecommunications, which is currently seeking approval for a prospectus and share sale on the fraudsman's favourite, the Vancouver Stock Exchange. Cycomm, run by Australian Philip Garratt, was much puffed by Coombs and its associate Christopher Mowbray.

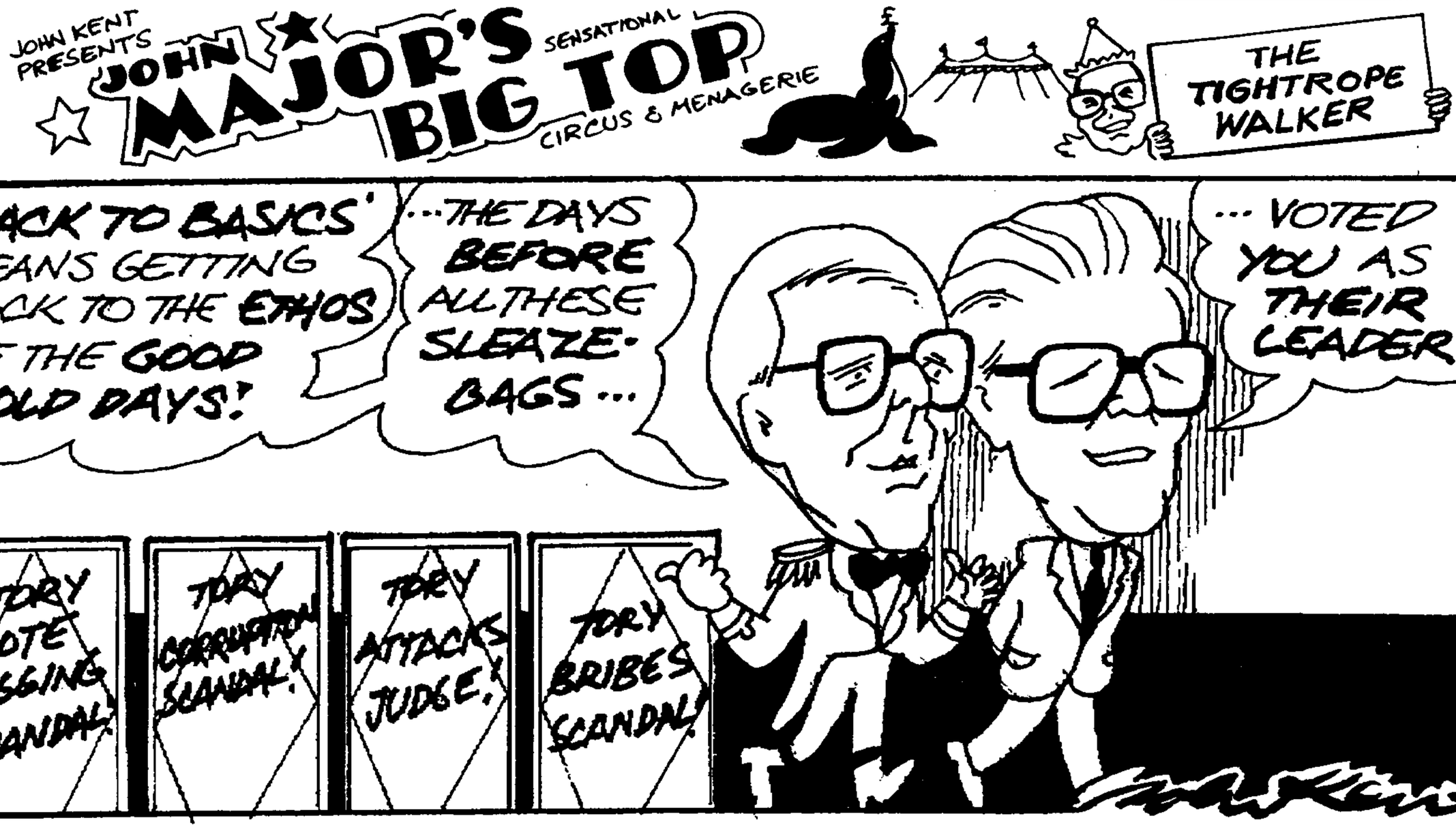
Already Canadian investigators have discovered an amazing litany of well known London names surfacing in the saga of Cycomm and a related VSE concern Rare Earth Resources. Names like Coombs's client Australian promoter Malcolm Johnson (currently facing a second SFO trial after being acquitted on the first). Also prominent are old favourites from the Polly Peck insider trading investigation such as Roger Leopard and Roger Hunziker of Rhone Finance and Michael Laidlaw of another bust broker, Giles & Overbury. As with Polly Peck, many Cycomm shares appear to have been acquired through PO Box 423 at Geneva airport, near the World Trade Centre offices of Rhone Finance, on behalf of clients.

Hopefully the Securities & Futures Authority will look closely at the Cycomm situation before allowing Coombs's former leading lights Andrew Kent and Patrick Mahon back into the chicken coop.

THE *Sunday Telegraph* is eagerly assisting the rehabilitation of Gerald Ronson after the traumas of Guinness, Ford open prison and the near collapse of his Heron empire. Ronson was a guest at the City section's Christmas party — following in the steps of such notables as Ernest Saunders and Robert Maxwell. Subsequently he featured (16 January) in a sympathetic profile. Obviously the harbinger to more good news to come in the *Hellograph*.

THE battle for Newspaper Publishing, owners of the *Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*, has created no little heartache for *Sunday Times* business editor Ivan Fallon. It is forcing him to choose between two of his favourite fellow Irishmen, David Montgomery and Tony O'Reilly. To date he has tended to come down in favour of O'Reilly "because he has a good record as an independent newspaper proprietor and because he usually gets what he wants". Could it also be because Fallon is reportedly writing an official biography of O'Reilly who — surprise, surprise — is used to favourable coverage in the *Sunset Times*? Obviously not, because no mention has been made of this project in Fallon's pro-O'Reilly Viewpoint columns of 9, 16 and 23 January.

'Slicker'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Quote of the week:

Harry Edgington, friend of Spike Milligan, has died, aged 74. The story goes that Harry Secombe once referred to him as "Edgerton", prompting a correction from Milligan, who said: "It's Edgington, Edgington", then emphasised the important syllables with "Yington, yington". Secombe added "Tiddle-i-po" and the rest is history.

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HAPPY CROOMDAY to PETE, the Wheatsheafer.

SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray. See "Eye Help".

99% OF POLITICS is crap! Find out about the 1% that isn't. For free magazine write: SOCIALIST STANDARD, Freepost, London SW4 7BR.

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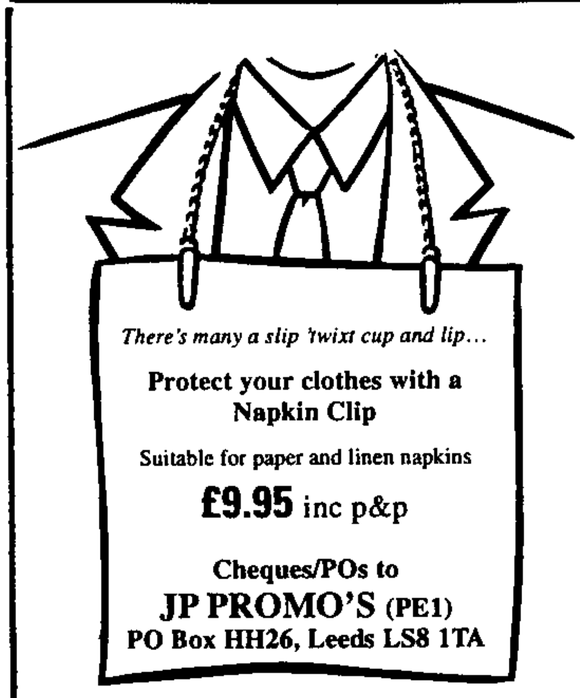

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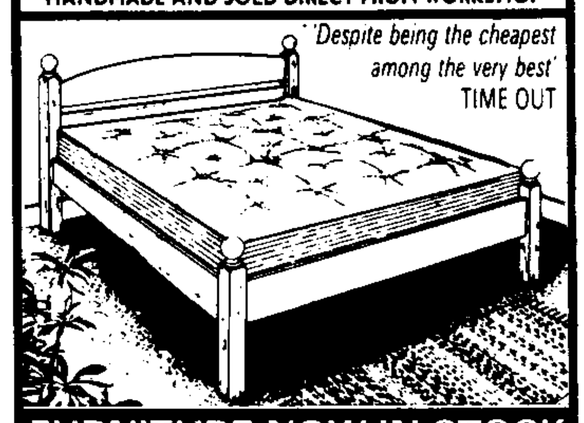

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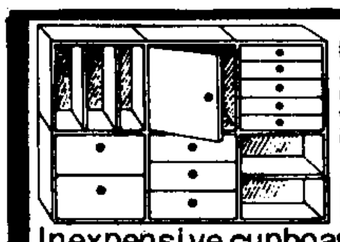

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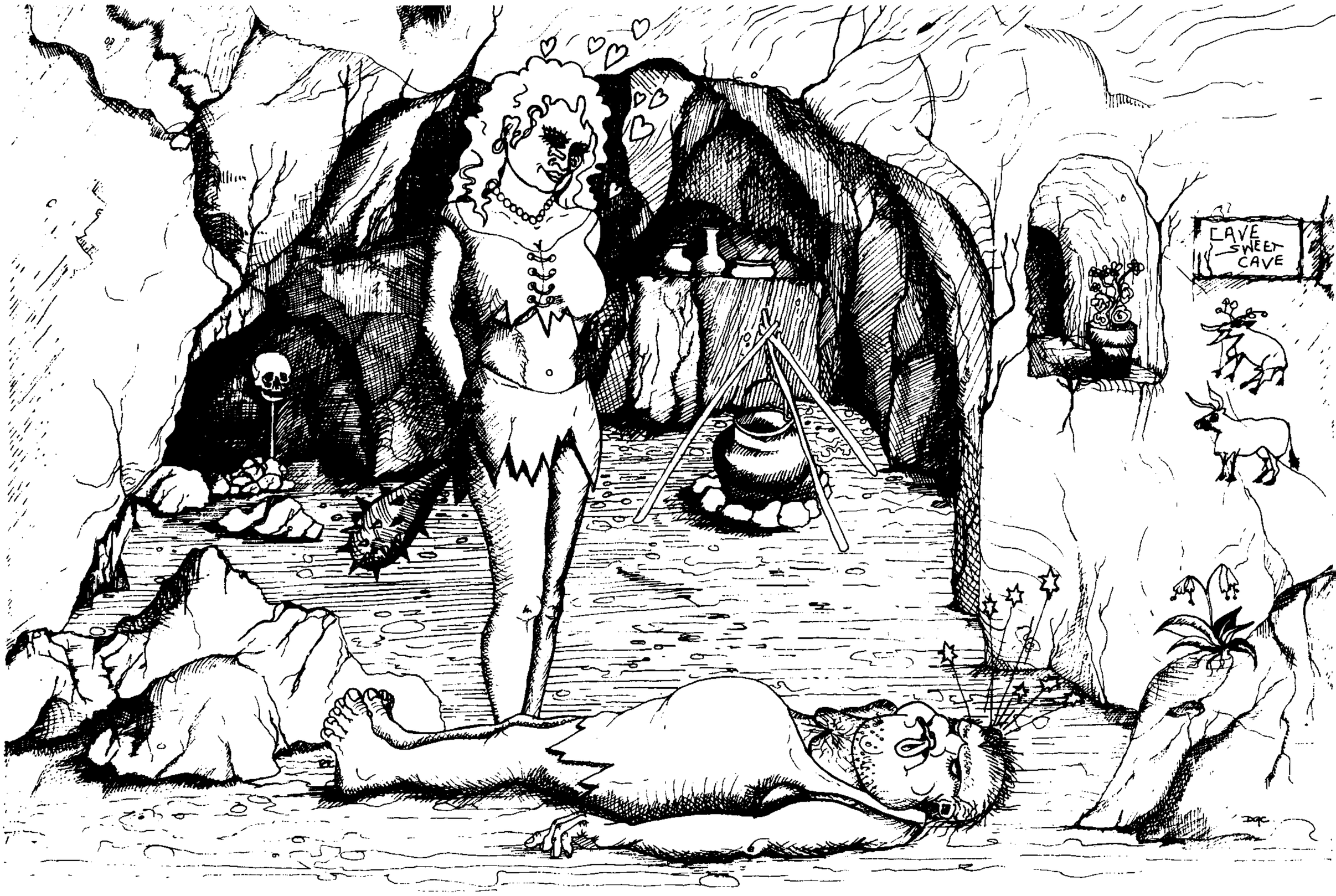

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